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ABSTRACT

This manual provides guidelines, sample documents, and sample lesson plans for the trainers, trainees, and host families involved in homestays for Peace Corps volunteers. The manual contains 11 sections that deal with the following topics: (1) introduction; (2) policy, timelines, and responsibilities; (3) medical and financial issues; (4) host family issues, recruiting, and orientation; (5) training issues; (6) homestay program guidelines; (7) matching trainees and host families; (8) trainee assessment; (9) conclusion; (10) 10 appendixes that include: acronyms and abbreviations, timing and duration of homestays by country, safety and policy considerations, responsibilities of the homestay coordinator, cultural tips about Americans, trainee homestay expectations, homestay family orientation for trainees, families and trainees joint sessions, sample homestay booklet for host families, and a homestay guide for trainees based on living with a Kenyan family; and (11) a list of 22 references. The manual is indexed. (KC)

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HOST FAMILIES MATTER: THE HOMESTAY MANUAL

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Host Families Matter:

The Homestay Manual

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"It's an essential part of training... my host family filled a gap left by my being away from my family back home. You can see how to interact and make a strong connection with them."

I.
INTRODUCTION

"...I felt that the homestay component of the Pre-Service Training (PST) was the most satisfying and beneficial part of the training process."

— A Peace Corps Trainee (PCT) in Sri Lanka

This sentiment sums up the feelings of many Trainees at the end of PST and promotes the notion that living with a host family is one of the best ways to prepare Trainees to live and work in the host country as Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV). Since two of the three goals of the Peace Corps (PC) are about cross-cultural understanding, requiring Trainees to live with a host family during their PST offers Trainees a valuable opportunity to meet those goals by learning about the host country, and sharing American culture with their host family.

As stated in Sri Lanka's Homestay Manual, "PST, above all the other training events, has the greatest opportunity to provide Volunteers with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes to live and work effectively in the country they serve. One major aspect of pre-service cross-cultural training is the host family living component. Living with a host family provides the Volunteer with an authentic situation to experience, observe, and learn day-to-day living aspects of the host-country culture. Although living with a host family provides the

Volunteer with the necessary exposure to the culture, the ability to generate meaningful learning out of that experience rests mainly on the training staff. Therefore, providing a productive host family living experience to promote skills, consciousness, and awareness of the Trainee should be the key theme of the homestay component."

Living with a host family greatly impacts the Trainees' understanding of the culture and language. It offers the Trainees an opportunity to observe and be part of family life, an experience they may not be given if it is not organized for them during PST. Through this experience, Trainees can learn gender roles, family values, traditions, appropriate behavior, plus much more. The benefits of placing Trainees with host families are innumerable and may influence the Volunteers' experience throughout their service.

Peace Corps homestay programs take a variety of forms throughout the world. The most common form is Trainees living with host families for the duration of PST. Yet, there are posts where Trainees spend only one week during PST with a host family, others where Volunteers continue to live with host families for their first three months of service, and posts where Volunteers spend their entire service living with a

"It gives you the opportunity to find new ways of coping."

host family (For specific country details see Appendix A). To make the writing—and reading—of this manual easier, the program in which Trainees live with host families for the duration of PST was used as a model. It is hoped, however, that staff responsible for the all types of homestay programs will glean valuable information about the challenging task of planning, organizing, and managing a homestay program.

This manual was developed using information from around the PC world. Quotations throughout the manual are taken from PC Trainees and Volunteers. Additionally, information was used from other international organizations with expertise in placing Americans with host families. A host family manual developed by PC Sri Lanka was used as a catalyst for the organization of the topics. For this reason, many examples are from Sri Lanka, but an effort has been made to include samples of training designs and homestay documents from all PC regions. After the Conclusion see Appendix A for Acronyms and Abbreviations. References (Manuals, Publications and Session Design Titles) are listed in section XI.

Since Peace Corps works in so many different cultures, it is impossible to offer specific models that will work at each post. Therefore, this manual offers an outline of what the components of a successful homestay program could entail based on the experiences of staff in the field. It may be viewed as a workbook which allows each post to use the models offered to develop their own specific policies, training designs, and documentation.

II.
The Bigger Picture

A. Policy Matters

The PC Headquarters Volunteer Safety Council developed a Best Practices manual in November 1996 that made the following statement about homestays:

"More and more posts have determined that placing Volunteers with host families improves their personal safety and facilitates their integration into the local culture. Some posts have established policies making family placement mandatory (for the initial three months after PST or for the entire two years)."

Each post needs to determine a homestay and family placement policy based on safety, logistical, cultural, and development factors of their host country. The following considerations for instituting homestay programs are based on comments from Country Directors (CD):

1. Clearly state the family placement policy in the Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) so incoming Volunteers are prepared.

2. Discuss expectations and issues (privacy vs. security) openly in PST.
3. Establish clear selection criteria, role definition, and expectations for host families.
4. Orient host families to Volunteers' needs and expectations.
5. Understand the impact of the homestay experience on the community and Peace Corps' concern for the community's overdependency.

This manual is concerned mainly with placing Trainees in host families for the duration of their PST. Yet, whether they live with families only during PST or for their entire two year service, the CD and other senior staff at post need to determine a clear policy on homestay and family placement. Trainees and Volunteers will need to adopt lifestyles and exercise judgments that promote safety and reduce risk in their homes (See Appendix C for sample policy from Ukraine).

"There are certain cross-cultural skills and principles that can be identified and learned during the homestay. Homestay provides the framework for the identification of principles and the development of skills."

B. Clarifying What We Are Doing: Goals and Objectives

Each post should have specific goals and objectives for its own homestay program. Reviewing programs from around the world some common goals and objectives begin to emerge. The length of each homestay program has an impact on the breadth of the objectives. Most commonly, Trainees are placed with host families for the duration of PST. In some countries, however, the homestay lasts for only one week of PST. In other countries, the Volunteers are required to live with a host family for the first three months of their service or for their entire two years.

The following goals and objectives were developed for programs lasting for the duration of the PST (roughly three months). These goals and objectives may be used as a model for developing post-specific ones. Keep in mind that for shorter programs the objectives need to be less comprehensive; for longer programs they may need to be expanded.

Goals:

1. To provide Trainees with an authentic opportunity to learn about the host country lifestyle, language, and culture by living with a host family.

2. To provide host families with an opportunity to learn about American lifestyles and culture by hosting a Trainee in their home.

OBJECTIVES:

Through their experience with host families, the Trainees will be able to:

1. Gain knowledge about the host country family lifestyle, social system, culture, and religion.
2. Begin to identify the differences and similarities between American and the host country ways of life.
3. Begin to develop effective skills for making the transition to living and working in a new culture (for at least two years).
4. Practice the target language.
5. Become closely involved with members of the host family and community.
6. Observe and start to practice culturally appropriate modes of behavior such as:
    - verbal and nonverbal communication
    - social etiquette
    - interacting within a family and community
    - negotiating an understanding of agreement
    - preparing meals, shopping, bathing, and so on
    - dressing customs
    - eating and drinking customs
    - using the local system of transportation and communication

"Being immersed in the culture is the best way to learn the language and the culture."

C. WHAT TO DO WHEN: A REALISTIC TIMELINE

The development and use of a realistic timeline for completing the many tasks associated with a homestay program are vital to its success. The sample timeline below details the tasks to be accomplished and when. Since staff resources vary dramatically from post to post, an empty column has been provided for posts to fill in the person responsible for the task in their country. (The next section, "Figuring out who does what," offers guidance on how these tasks might be divided among staff.) Notice that the timeline begins six months prior to the PST, and includes a yearly review of the homestay and family placement policy.

HOMESTAY PROGRAM TIMELINE

WHEN	TASK	WHO
Once a year	• Country Director (CD) and appropriate staff develop or review homestay and family placement policy.	
6 months prior to PST	• Review the homestay program from previous years or contact a neighboring post with extensive experience if this is a start-up program. • Revise goals and objectives as necessary. • Determine staff roles and responsibilities for the upcoming homestay program and plan to recruit any necessary additional staff. • Plan for homestay events in master Pre-Service Training (PST) schedule (host family orientation, Trainee orientation sessions, introduction event, debriefing activities, on-going sessions, thank you and appreciation reception, and so on.)	
3 months prior to PST	• Develop host family selection criteria. Include health and safety guidelines developed by Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO). • Update homestay program written guidelines for host families and Trainees, and any other related documents, as necessary. • Develop and implement host family recruiting strategy. (It may be necessary to hire the homestay coordinator at this time.) • Re-contact host families from previous training classes who might be interested in hosting a Trainee again.	
PST Planning Stage	• Orient and train PST staff on all aspects of the homestay program. Include the PCMO or medical staff to provide necessary guidance in dealing with health and safety aspects. • In coordination with the Administrative Officer (AO), develop a schedule of payments to reimburse host families. • Visit the selected host families with PCMO or medical staff and make final selection of host families. • Provide services (fumigation and household repair) to host families, if necessary. • Organize and conduct initial homestay program orientations for host families, clarifying goals and objectives, expectations, American values, reimbursement, emergency contact information, and when they will meet their Trainee. • Distribute and collect the Host Family Questionnaires. (see appendix) • Compile basic information on each of the host families. (p. 52 of this manual) • Develop a schedule of interviews with host families to check in with them at least three times during PST. • In conjunction with Cross-Cultural Coordinator, develop session plans for the host family and Trainee introduction event, Trainee debriefing, and other on-going homestay-related sessions. • Determine when and how homestays will be evaluated.	

WHEN	TASK	WHO
Day 1 of PST	• Organize and conduct initial homestay program orientation for Trainees. Clarify goals and objectives, expectations for Trainees and host families, reimbursement, and emergency contact information. • Distribute and collect Trainee Questionnaire.	
Day 2 of PST	• Using Host Family Questionnaires and Trainee Questionnaires, match Trainees and host families.	
Day Trainees go to host families	• Facilitate the introduction event for host families and Trainees to meet each other.	
Day Trainees first return from families	• Conduct homestay debriefing activity after Trainees first night with their families.	
First two weeks of PST	• Conduct language sessions designed to help Trainees in their homestay.	
During PST	• PCMO or medical staff monitor the health and safety aspects of the homestay program. • Regularly provide information, guidance, and feedback to both the Trainees and the host families. • Conduct training sessions on a regular basis to generate learning from the Trainees' homestay experience. (Use host family members as guest speakers when appropriate.)	
Mid-PST	• Hold homestay program events (i.e., picnic, party, American holiday celebration, and so on.) • Conduct mid-PST evaluation of the homestay program with Trainees, host families, and staff.	
End of PST	• Formally thank host families through an event such as a celebration or inviting them to the Trainee swearing-in ceremony. • Conduct final evaluation of the homestay program with Trainees, host families, and staff. • Ask all PST staff involved with the homestay program to submit reports on what worked, what did not work, and suggestions for the next training class.	
After PST	• Analyze all evaluative information, and keep complete and concise records for the purpose of planning the next homestay program.	

D. FIGURING OUT WHO DOES WHAT: STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The homestay program timeline helps to determine the specific tasks that need to be accomplished. Next, the individual tasks need to be assigned to staff members. Since Peace Corps countries differ in staff configuration and numbers of PSTs per year, it is not possible to provide a model of exactly who should handle each task. Some posts have several PSTs throughout the year and have permanent staff members devoted to their homestay program. Other posts bring on short-term homestay coordinators for each PST. Yet other posts divide the tasks between training assistants (TA), program managers (PM), associate Peace Corps directors (APCD), and other permanent PC staff. Each post must consider how best to develop its specific list of staff roles and responsibilities as they relate to the human and financial resources available for the homestay program.

"Homestay is an effective preparation for life in the host country."

Nevertheless, some staff roles and responsibilities are universal. The PC medical staff needs to be involved with all aspects of the homestay program to insure the health and safety of the Trainees. This includes developing the host family selection criteria, assisting in the selection of host families, facilitating health and safety sessions for the host family and Trainee orientations, and monitoring the health and safety aspects of the program. The administrative officer (AO) needs to be involved in developing and implementing the reimbursement of host families as well as in other administrative and logistical duties. A Host Country National (HCN) staff person should be assigned as an advisor to moderate problems between host families and Trainees. And, as discussed earlier, the CD must be involved in establishing the homestay and family placement policy.

To demonstrate one way the management of the program may be handled, the following is an example of how staff roles and responsibilities are divided in Sri Lanka. This example is unique in the use of the language instructors (LI) who recruit host families and maintain contact with them throughout the PST.

SAMPLE – SRI LANKA

HOMESTAY STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Country Director (CD)

- Develop homestay and family placement policy.

Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD)

- Setup and review homestay program goals and objectives, and the host family selection criteria in consultation with the language/cultural training coordinator (LCTC), PCMO, and training assistant (TA).
- Orient and train PC staff and PST staff regarding the homestay program.
- Monitor the homestay program in coordination with the LCTC.
- Evaluate the homestay program.

Language/Cultural Training Coordinator (LCTC)

- Develop a host family selection strategy for the PST.
- Orient and train language staff regarding the homestay program and coordinate selection of host families with the PST language staff.
- Assist the language instructor (LI) and language coordinator (LC) in the final selection of host families.
- Organize and conduct homestay program orientation and evaluation (initial, mid-PST, and final) for host families in coordination with the PST staff.
- Organize and conduct homestay program orientation for Trainees in coordination with PST staff.
- Provide necessary guidance and support to the PST staff for implementing the homestay program.
- Serve as the key liaison between PC staff and PST staff in regard to the homestay program and update regularly the APCD on the status of the homestay program.

Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO)

- Establish the health and safety guidelines for the host family selection criteria.
- Provide necessary guidance and guidelines to PST staff for dealing with health and safety aspects of the homestay program.
- Finalize the selection of host families with LCTC and visit the selected families.
- Monitor the health and safety aspects of the homestay program.

Sample – Sri Lanka

Training Assistant

- Train and orient project director (PD) and AO on the logistics of the homestay program (how to request host family payments from AO, how to disburse payments to host families, and so on).

Project Director (PD)

- Finalize the selection of host families with the LCTC and visit the selected families.
- Implement, monitor, and evaluate the homestay program.
- Organize host family event in coordination with the LCTC.
- Monitor and provide necessary guidance to the Trainees and host families.
- Design and conduct training sessions to extract learning from the Trainees' homestay experience.
- Update APCD and LCTC regularly regarding the homestay program.

Administrative Coordinator

- Compile and maintain information on each host family.
- Assist with all the logistical work in organizing homestay program events.
- Request host family payments from the AO and distribute host family payments in consultation with the PD.

Language Coordinator (LC)

- Work with LI and LCTC to identify and make final selection of host families.
- Assist LCTC and PD in designing and implementing the homestay program.
- Oversee LI's participation in the homestay program and provide necessary guidance.

Language Instructors

- Work in teams and use the host family selection criteria to identify host families for Trainees.
- Assist the LCTC and LC in the final selection of host families.
- Serve as the liaison for 4 to 5 host families and maintain regular communication with them.
- Monitor the homestay program by providing the necessary information, guidance, and feedback to both the Trainees and the host families.
- Maintain a regular communication about the homestay program with the LCTC, LC and the PD

In contrast to Sri Lanka's homestay program, the Slovak Republic hires two people two months before the PST to focus completely on recruiting host families. These staff persons remain throughout the PST to manage and monitor the program. In Papua New Guinea, APCDs are responsible for recruiting host families and the PD monitors the program. In some countries community members are hired to recruit families (see Appendix D for responsibilities and functions of the homestay coordinator and homestay liaison from Zambia). Because of the vast variation in the way that homestay responsibilities are divided, the term homestay coordinator is used in the manual to refer to the person or persons responsible for the homestay program.

III. Medical and Financial Issues

A. Staying Safe and Well in the Family

Ideally, the PCMO should play an active role in determining the host family selection criteria and in the actual selection of host families. If the PCMO is not able to devote the time necessary to the program, a trained medical staff person with access to the confidential Trainee medical files may serve as the PCMO's representative. However, since it is ideal that the PCMO be directly involved in the development and implementation of the homestay program, the term PCMO will be used when referring to the staff people responsible for medical issues.

The PCMO should develop a list of health and safety guidelines to help homestay coordinators select host families. An extensive safety considerations list appears in Appendix C. Optimally, the PCMO should visit all prospective host families to offer input as to which host families would provide the healthiest environment for the Trainees. Medical considerations used for the selection of host families include:

- accommodations (sleeping and bathing facilities)
- number of people living in the house (in relation to the size of the house).
- general cleanliness and sanitation
- health of the family members
- food (preparation and storage)
- water
- insects
- pets
- wild animals
- environmental dangers
- personal safety and security

The specifics of these health and safety considerations will be different at each post. In central Europe, for example, the PC staff is concerned about environmental dangers; in parts of Africa, water is a major concern; and in parts of the South Pacific, personal safety and security concern the staff. Based upon the general topics provided above, each post needs to develop their own set of health and safety consideration for the selection of host families.

"Even though the realities [at your post] are different, homestay is the best way for Trainees to develop new life skills and build self-reliance."

The PCMO needs to work closely with the homestay coordinator and offer guidance and direction in the individual placement of Trainees. Hidden medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, or heart disease may necessitate that a Trainee be placed close to a PC-approved medical facility, or the training center. In such cases, the PCMO is not allowed to disclose why the Trainee needs to be placed in a particular proximity; however the homestay coordinator must follow the PCMO's recommendations exactly. 5U.S.C§ 552a

Additionally, the homestay experience provides Trainees an opportunity to learn what is required to maintain their health in the host country, and to observe the health conditions of their homestay community. The medical and training staff can look at the homestay as an experiential phase of medical, safety, and security training—a perfect opportunity to educate Trainees on PC medical policy as they relate to common host country practices. With this in mind, both Trainees and host families should be given clear guidelines on PC medical, safety, and security policies—particularly, what to do in case of an emergency. During health and safety training, the PCMO may make his/her presentations more interactive by asking the Trainees to reflect upon experiences they have had at their homestay.

B. FAIR REIMBURSEMENT

The appropriate reimbursement for the host families is an issue that each post must determine for themselves. The questions to consider are: Is reimbursement culturally appropriate? If so, what amount is fair? And, what is the best way, given the culture and logistics, to get the reimbursement to the host family?

Hosting a Trainee should never be a way for families to make money. Reimbursement should be limited to providing the host family with the means to feed the Trainee, and, in some cases, to pay for other necessary expenses the host family will incur by hosting a Trainee. Most posts reimburse host families for Trainee's food, and many posts give the money directly to the Trainees to give to the host family. Some posts wire money directly into bank accounts as in Namibia. In South Africa families receive food packages instead of monetary reimbursement. There are, however, other variations on how to do it. The only absolute is that everyone involved must know the arrangements for reimbursement. In other words, the host families, the Trainees, and the PC staff need to know how much the families will be receive, when, and how. Under no circumstances should the reimbursement of families lead to the Trainees or the families making a profit. If families are not receiving their money, or if Trainees feel they are not getting the food that they need, the homestay coordinator needs to intervene and rectify the situation.

"It's a very effective transition for their life in the village."

Although it may not be culturally appropriate in all countries, some posts have successfully used a contract, signed by the host families, detailing PC's expectations of them and the amount of reimbursement. Below is a sample of a host family contract used in Uzbekistan.

HOST FAMILY CONTRACT

Agency: Peace Corps, Uzbekistan
address

Host Family: _____

This is a contract between the Peace Corps and the above listed family of Gulistan, Uzbekistan. The above family agrees to host an American Peace Corps Volunteer beginning September 14 to November 30.

The host family will provide the following:

- Transportation for the Volunteer and his/her luggage on September 14 from the training center to their home.
- A separate sleeping room with his/her own bed.
- Adequate lighting in the room and space for the Volunteer to store his/her clothes.
- Breakfast and dinner Monday through Friday every week.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner every Saturday and Sunday.
- Clean bed sheets and bath towel once a week.
- Access to the home phone (if one exists) for occasional local phone calls.
- Readiness to assist the Volunteer with questions and to help in his/her study of Uzbekistani culture, family life, and the Uzbek language.

The Peace Corps agrees to:

- Pay the family 2,200 som per month that it hosts a Volunteer.
- Always pay the family in advance.
- Respond to any questions or concerns the family may have.

_____ _____
Host Family Representative Date

_____ _____
Peace Corps Administrative Officer Date

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This contract is finalized before Trainees arrive, therefore, Trainees do not sign it. However, in the countries where these contracts are used, the homestay coordinators have suggested implementing a contract for Trainees to sign as well.

"Homestay is a representation of what your life is going to be: a reality check."

IV.
It's All In The Family

A. Finding The Right Family

Selecting host families can be one of the most challenging parts of the homestay program. Before recruitment begins, specific criteria must be developed for the selection of the host families so that the recruiting strategy can target the correct host families.

Host families' living conditions should approximate the level that the Trainees will be expected to live during their entire PC service. Placing Trainees in affluent families may give them an inaccurate impression and could ultimately prove to be a disservice to the Trainee. This said, it is often the wealthier families in a community who offer their homes, since they are also the households that have the space and amenities necessary to host a Trainee. Though it may be difficult, an effort needs to be made to find families that either approximate the lifestyle the Trainees will have or represent the community the Trainees will work with after PST. In Benin for example, they expect that most families will be generally "typical" of the communities where they live. However, because of requirements regarding basic Trainee comforts, health and security, some host families may well be somewhat better off economically

than many of their neighbors. Experience has shown that there is no great correlation between level of material comforts and Trainee satisfaction. In Benin, as long as minimal requirements are met, no family is preferred or excluded on the basis of relative wealth alone.

In Thailand, for example, an effort is made to place education Trainees in host families with parents who are teachers. In Panama, Volunteers assigned to Agroforestry projects are placed in communities with subsistence farmers; small business development workers may be placed with host families that have members who are involved in local stores or cooperatives, or who are business owners. As long as the minimum requirements are met, no family should be excluded or preferred on the basis of social status or relative wealth alone.

"It's a great imitation of what you are going to experience for two years."

It is possible that some HCNs (as well as Americans) may insist that the most "typical" or "best" families are composed of a father, mother, and their children. In fact, however, a family composed of a female head of household, her children, and other collateral relatives may be just as typical in many societies, and therefore perfectly acceptable as a host family. Even in such instances, though, there will most likely be an adjunct male (or males) to the household in the way of "occasional" spouse, grandfather, uncle, or son-in-law. Such arrangements are fine as long as they are not the subject of community scandal. As one speaks with community members during site surveys and family searches, there will usually emerge a sense that candidate families are generally well regarded by neighbors and not associated with anti-social behaviors (such as drunkenness or violence).

Additionally, the motivation of a prospective host family should be considered. PC looks for host families who want an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange, to make an American friend, and to help a Trainee learn about their culture and language. Caution should be exercised with families seeking an opportunity for their children to learn English, to get jobs at PC or other American organizations, to obtain visas or green cards to the United States, or a marriage partner for an unmarried son or daughter. Prospective host families need to understand the goals and objectives of the homestay program in order for them to make a commitment to hosting a Trainee.

The desire to host a PC Trainee is only part of what is needed for a family to be selected. All PC countries with homestay programs have unique host family selection criteria based on health and safety requirements and cultural factors. Nevertheless, some general considerations appear universal in host family selection. Compiled from criteria around the world, the following list reflects the minimum requirements of a host family. Obviously, specific criteria will differ depending on the living standards and culture of the host country. This list is a starting point, a guide for each post to develop its specific host family selection criteria based on the experiences of past Trainees and host families, as well as on safety, security, medical and cultural considerations.

Host Family Selection Criteria: Minimum Requirements of a Host Family

The host family **should be**:

- ☐ No more than 30 minutes travel time from the training center for a center based training, and no more than one hour travel time from the training center for a community based training.
- ☐ A "typical" family from that country. Families considered minority or alternative families (single parents, younger/older couples, unmarried people, widows) make good host families as long as the training staff makes an effort to process the Trainees' experiences as a group in order to enlighten all the Trainees to the variety of families in the community.
- ☐ Reputable members of the community.
- ☐ Speakers of the target language, with few, if any, English speakers. (Note: it is possible that the host family and the Trainee could share a language other than English, such as Spanish, Chinese, French or Russian, In such a case, the Trainee should be placed in a family in which they will be exposed to as much of the target language as possible and not tempted to speak another common language.)
- ☐ Healthy family members—people free of communicable diseases.

The host family **should have**:

- ☐ A shower/bucket bath structure that allows Trainees to bathe in privacy.
- ☐ A toilet/latrine that allows for privacy and is not far from the house for night time use and security.
- ☐ A source of drinkable water.
- ☐ Good sanitation and waste management practices.

The host family **should provide**:

- ☐ A bedroom exclusively for the Trainee with a lockable door for privacy and security, and a quiet place for the Trainee to study—a desk and lamp, if appropriate.
- ☐ A bed exclusively for the Trainee.
- ☐ Nutritious meals that are prepared in a clean kitchen with drinkable water.
- ☐ Willingness to spend time with the Trainee.

These criteria should serve as general guidelines for selecting families who will host Peace Corps Trainees. However, each family housing situation will be unique, and common sense should prevail in the final selection of host families. The specifics of the host family selection criteria differ from country to country. In some countries, PC might offer host families supplies such as water filters, lanterns, or bedding. Some countries expect the host family to provide a mattress for the bed; others do not. Some countries expect a flush toilet inside the house; others actually help a prospective host family dig a pit latrine. Additionally some programs fumigate host family homes, repair leaky roofs, and put locks on doors. At posts where these types of services are necessary for the health or safety of the Trainees, a staff person needs to be hired or a current PC staff member should be assigned to provide these services. Also, since it may be language staff or others who will assist in finding families, selection criteria must be well understood by them.

"Homestay helps to integrate sooner, to get used to the host culture,...it gives a chance to be in the real world."

B. HOST FAMILY RECRUITING STRATEGY

Developing a good host family recruiting strategy is paramount to the program's success. All around the PC world host families are recruited in different ways. In Sri Lanka, the language instructors go in teams to villages that are within walking distance of the training center; in Papua New Guinea, APCDs, who are HCNs, contact their own extended family members; in Lesotho, village chiefs are asked if their entire village will host a group of Trainees; and in the Slovak Republic and Bulgaria, radio announcements and newspaper ads are used to attract interested families. A village priest, mullah, or other prominent social figure

Dear Parents,

My name is _____ and I am an American currently living in Bishkek and volunteering for the Peace Corps, a United States government agency. I and _____, Peace Corps training homestay coordinator, are writing to you to request your assistance.

The Peace Corps is an organization that has been in existence for 35 years and that has been working in Kyrgyzstan since February 1993. Peace Corps/Kyrgyzstan is currently preparing for the arrival of 35 to 40 American Peace Corps Volunteers. Beginning in September these Volunteers will be living in communities throughout Kyrgyzstan and working at universities and secondary schools teaching English as well as working in small enterprise development.

Before these Peace Corps Volunteers begin their work, they must participate in an intensive training program lasting from June 8 to August 23. The training program will be held at School No. 1 in Kant.

During the time the Volunteers are receiving training, we would like them to have the opportunity of living with a Kyrgyzstani family. Through the experience of living with Kyrgyzstani families for 10 weeks, Volunteers will develop their knowledge of Kyrgyzstani family life, customs, culture, and religions; learn to speak Kyrgyz and/or Russian effectively; and begin to adjust to the Kyrgyzstani way of life.

This is where we need your help. Are you interested in having a Peace Corps Volunteer live with your family from June 14 to August 23? During this time the Volunteer would sleep at your home and eat meals with your family. During the weekdays the Volunteer would be attending classes. We do not expect you to treat the Volunteer as a guest. We want you to feel comfortable talking and sharing experiences with the Volunteer, while helping him or her learn about Kyrgyzstani daily life. We would, of course, compensate you for the Volunteer's lodging and meals.

If you are interested in being a "host family" for a Volunteer please call the Peace Corps' Bishkek office at _____ and ask to speak with _____ or _____. Also, please join us for a general information meeting to be held at_____ on Saturday, May 25 at 6:30 p.m. In this meeting you will learn more about the Peace Corps and hosting a Volunteer. Please come. You are welcome!

Thank you for your support. Your assistance can help to make the Volunteer's first impressions of Kyrgyzstan positive and our training program successful.

Sincerely,

Director of Training

Homestay Coordinator

might possibly be a good source for family references. In Mali, villages that host Trainees are rotated every PST, thus not building a dependency on a certain village. Each post should develop its own culturally appropriate host family recruiting strategy well in advance of the PST since its implementation has a great effect on the timeline and may require hiring additional staff to begin work two or three months prior to the PST.

In general, word of mouth is the best form of host family recruitment. Host families that have had a positive experience with a Trainee may be asked to share their experience with others and to help identify appropriate families. Advertising through the use of posters, radio, newspaper, and so on is often a part of a successful host family recruiting strategy. Networking through the PC staff, current Volunteers, host country counterparts, schools, religious organizations, civic organizations, and local governments is often effective.

"Living with a host family is an experiential self-awareness process."

Host family recruitment should begin at least three months prior to the PST and have adequate staff resources devoted to it in the beginning to ensure enough host families when the Trainees arrive in country. Searching for host families the week prior to the arrival of the Trainees should be avoided, if at all possible.

Recruiting and selecting families should never be based on personal gain. It is important to have many staff involved in selecting families.

Samples of recruiting posters and radio announcement scripts are difficult to share as they are all written in the local language. However, the letter on page 23, written by a Volunteer, demonstrates the terms used to recruit host families in Kyrgystan.

In the Slovak Republic three months before the Trainees arrive, posters announcing the search for host families are put up in grocery stores, post offices, schools, and any other place that will accept them. The posters are written in Slovak; explain about the Peace Corps, describe Volunteers, list the application deadline, state requirements that need to be met by host families, and include the phone number where more information can be obtained.

In Moldova, prospective host families are invited to a presentation to acquaint them with the purpose of the PC homestay program. This type of "open house" approach to recruitment is used in many countries. Following is a sample outline of the presentation in Moldova.

Host Family Briefing

Before beginning the process of individually interviewing and selecting Moldovan families to host Trainees for 5 weeks, prospective host families need an introduction to the purpose of the homestay, to the needs and expectations of the Peace Corps, what the Peace Corps will provide the families, and to have an opportunity to ask questions so they may determine whether they wish to participate.

Goals:

To explain the purpose of the homestay experience and the support PC will provide.

Objectives:

1. To clarify desire for host family participation and assistance in cultural, language, and technical learning of the Trainees.
2. To address cultural matters, such as special needs of privacy, American and Moldovan culture, food, Trainees coming home late in the evening, drinking, which may arise during a homestay experience.
3. To discuss administrative matters such as the host family interview and selection process; room, food, and laundry requirements; daily remuneration and process of payment.
4. To explain the possibility that the number of Trainees arriving may be fewer than expected and the possibility of early termination.

SAMPLE SESSION PLAN – MOLDOVA

PROCEDURES:

5 min. Distribute host family guidelines and general information on the Peace Corps and its work in Moldova to each family.

10 min Introduce the PC Country Director, who will speak about the Peace Corps and Peace Corps in Moldova, and explain the Peace Corps' homestay policy.

5 min. Introduce families to the purpose of the homestay experience including some history of its use in previous Peace Corps trainings in other countries. Identify dates of the homestay.

10min. Introduce the PST project director. Speak about work of Peace Corps around the world and the importance and value of homestays.

10min. Introduce one of the host mothers from the last group. Speak about the experience of hosting an American Peace Corps Trainee.

40 min. Go through the homestay guidelines with families. Allow for questions after each section.

15 min. Ask families to raise any questions or concerns they may have and answer them.

5 min. Close session by requesting families interested in being visited, interviewed, and considered for selection to sign up on one of the visit schedules. Explain they will then be visited at that time on that day.

C. Host Family Orientation

Once the families have been selected, it is important to bring them all together for a formal orientation to PC, PST, and the homestay program. This is an opportunity for them to gain specific information, meet the PC staff, get to know other host families, and have an opportunity to ask questions. It also gives PC a chance to ask additional questions and observe the families again to better matches them with the Trainees. The orientation should include all families selected, and may include as many family members as is culturally appropriate and logistically possible.

Hosting one orientation at the training center is the most efficient, but for some posts it is impossible or impractical for the homestay coordinator to get all the host families together or to cover all the material in one session. At posts where an entire village is recruited to host a group of Trainees, the training staff, often including some Volunteers, may conduct the host family orientation in the village as well. In Togo, for example, Volunteers help recruit host families and then assist in preparing them to receive Trainees. Some posts include demonstrations on boiling water, using a latrine, and so on. However, in this manual, the host family orientation is one session.

"Homestay is a way to develop one's own self-awareness."

Experienced homestay coordinators recommend that approximately 10 percent more families than are actually needed be recruited and invited to the orientation. This precaution is in case some families decide not to host a Trainee or a Trainee needs to be moved during PST. For example, if 40 Trainees need a home, then approximately 44 families should be recruited and invited to attend the host family orientation. Once matching of the host families has been completed, the homestay coordinator should contact the extra host families and explain to them, in a culturally sensitive manner, that they are needed as alternate host families should a Trainee need to be moved.

In most countries, attending the host family orientation is a requirement for becoming a host family. If a host family is unable to attend the host family orientation, or does not show up, then that family should not be matched with a Trainee. Circumstances may necessitate, however, providing a host family with an individual orientation session. If many families cannot attend, or if there are a large number of families, the training staff may offer two host family orientation sessions and allow the selected host families to choose which they will attend. The ideal time to conduct the host family orientation is during the week before the Trainees are scheduled to begin living with the host families.

"Homestay provides the 'training laboratory' for skill building and application."

In keeping with PC training philosophy, the orientation session for families needs to be as interactive as possible. Often current Volunteers are invited to perform skits about common and predictable issues that arise during the homestay. The skits have been received with great enthusiasm and generate much discussion in some countries. If possible, present a skit with a common problem, break the host families into small groups to discuss what they would do in that situation, and then bring them back to discuss it. Having former host family members participate in a panel discussion is another useful training method for the host family orientation. Though many ways exist to make the session interactive and enjoyable for the host families, the facilitator must be sensitive to cultural norms for the orientation and for any other training sessions.

Some specific content needs to be covered during the host family orientation session. The PCMO should attend, as many topics deal with the health and safety of the Trainees. It would be ideal if the CD and the AO could also attend. All PST staff who interact with the host families need to have a role during the orientation so that the families have an opportunity to get to know who they are to

contact in case they need assistance. The following are three scenarios from the Africa Region homestay manual used for host family orientation. These scenarios may be acted out and used to trigger discussion among the host families.

Scenario 1:

A female Trainee is leaving home at night to meet some fellow Trainees in a bar. She has already told her host mom who didn't object to the situation. Upon leaving the compound, her host papa asks to talk to her for a few minutes. He tells the Trainee about the small amount of time she spends with the host family, safety issues, and his concerns about her going out too often at night. Basically, he is trying to persuade the Trainee, indirectly, to stay at home. The Trainee finds an excuse telling him not to worry and goes off to town.

Scenario 2:

The homestay coordinator comes to visit a host family at dinnertime. The Trainee, having left this morning for classes at the training center, is not at home. However, the family knows that their Trainee will not come for dinner tonight. They have saved the Trainee dinner which was different from the "satza" the family was having. The host father is having dinner in the Trainee's room with a visiting relative.

Scenario 3:

It is Sunday, the Trainee has a severely upset stomach since the night before and is resting in his/her room. The host mother brings the Trainee breakfast along with some traditional medicine strongly recommended for indigestion. She suggests the Trainee take the medicine along with her meal so she will feel better and go to church with the family. The host mother argues that the week before her son had the same problem and soon after he took the medicine his recovery was total.

Following on page 30 and 31 is an outline of suggested topics adapted from PC Sri Lanka. These suggested topics need to be modified and addressed in a way that is culturally relevant, sensitive, and specific. Likewise, there may be other topics that are significant to each post.

Sample Orientation Topics – Sri Lanka

Host Family Orientation Topics

General Welcome and Introduction

- What is PC? PC mission and goals.
- Brief history of PC in the country.
- Introduction of permanent PC staff.

PST

- Brief overview of the purpose of PST.
- Introduction of PST staff.
- PST schedule.
- Goals and objectives of the homestay program (see p. 5–6).

PC Expectations of the Host Families

- Host family selection criteria (see p. 21).
- Family's role in explaining and describing the culture.
- Suggested activities with Trainees: gardening, shopping, including them in family events (funerals, weddings, and so on).
- The need for patience with the Trainees (time consuming schedule, much is new so the Trainee may become tired or sick).
- Trainees cannot arrange jobs or visas.

The Language

- No structured language lessons are expected from the host family, simply speak the target language with the Trainee.
- Do not use Trainees' time to practice English or take English lessons.

Health and Safety/PC Medical Policy

- Trainees medical procedure prior to arrival. Address issues related to the host country's stereotypical fears of foreigners (AIDS, STDs, and so on).
- Privacy of PC medical information.

Trainees' Security

- Personal property (theft).
- Sexual harassment.

(See Appendix C: Trainees Security Statement from Zambia).

Emergencies

- When is a situation an emergency? And what to do about it.

Sample Orientation Topics – Sri Lanka

- Emergency contact information (phone numbers or radio frequencies, if appropriate).
- PC area doctor.

Keeping the Trainee Healthy

- Cleanliness (boiled water, clean toilets, and so on).

Food

- Make food bland at first. (This is country specific—less spicy, less fatty, less salty, and so on depending upon the health issues Trainees often encounter as they adjust to the food.)
- Nutrition is essential for Trainee's health. This includes fresh vegetables and fruits daily.
- What being a vegetarian means.
- Trainees don't like to be forced to eat. (A Trainee refusing to eat doesn't mean they do not like the food.)

American Cultural Values and Diversity

- What many Americans value. (The importance of privacy, independence, and so on. See sample handout from Zambia in Appendix D.)
- What many Trainees don't like (noise, loud TV or radio, comparison with former Trainees, reference to skin color, treating minorities differently, being called fat, being treated like a child, having belongings gone through, and so on).
- The United States is a multiracial and multicultural society.
- Senior Trainees.
- Differently abled Trainees (if applicable).

Helping the Trainee Feel Comfortable

- Describe the cycle of cultural adjustment and explain that the Trainees may likely feel homesick.
- Most Trainees are not looking for a marriage partner.
- Most Trainees need a little time after coming back from being with other PCVs or from the training center to get settled.
- The Trainee should be encouraged to help the host family with cooking and other household activities. It will usually make them feel welcome, yet, don't force them to help.

Logistics

- Brief overview of Trainees' orientation.
- Homestay coordinator's visit to the family.
- Evaluation (mid-PST, final).
- Reimbursement for Trainee expenses.
- Who to contact if things are not going well.

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

Handouts might be important especially for emergency contact information and the PST schedule. However, if the host family members are illiterate, other more appropriate ways should be used to deliver the information. Additionally, local custom might dictate that such an orientation event include a prayer, refreshments, or local dignitaries as speakers. Host families provide moral support to Trainees, countless hours of language reinforcement, insights into local customs and culture, as well as hands-on technical experience. Host families are an investment, and quality time spent on preparing families will be worthwhile as families become informal trainers and advocates for the Peace Corps and the Trainee.

V.
TRAINING ISSUES

A. TRAINEE ORIENTATION

When Trainees arrive in country, they likely will be curious and sometimes anxious about their homestay experience. To ease their concerns, some basic information about the homestay program should be offered in the initial sessions of the PST. Specific sessions to prepare for the homestay may take place in later sessions or as part of cross-cultural training. The time required to cover orientation topics to prepare Trainees for their families needs to be considered when determining the date the Trainees will go to their host families. The topics below may be covered in an orientation session one to two days prior to the day the Trainees meet and go home with their host families. These topics may also be covered beginning with the general cross-cultural material and ending with the specific logistical information in a series of sessions.

Sample Orientation Topics

Trainee Homestay Orientation Topics

General Welcome and Introduction

- Goals and objectives of the homestay program (see p. 5).
- Criteria used in identifying and selecting the families (see p. 21).
- Explain the host family orientation (see p. 27–32).

Expectations of the Trainees (see Appendix F for Africa and Thailand designs)

- The importance of interacting with the host family to get the most out of the homestay.
- Understanding the host family's adaptation process

Language

- Practice speaking the target language.
- Families have been advised not to give structured language lessons. If more help beyond natural conversation is needed ask the language staff.
- Most host family members do not speak English so the target language must be spoken. (Unless, of course, English is the target language.)
- A handout of survival language terms may be distributed.

PC Medical Policy

- Address issues related to the host country's stereotypical health misperceptions of non-locals (AIDS, STDs, and so on). Trainees' medical procedure prior to arrival has been explained to host families.
- Privacy of medical information.
- PC can not provide medicine or medical advice to ill host family members.

Emergencies

- When is a situation an emergency? And what to do about it.
- A handout of emergency contact information (be sure it matches the information given to host families.)
- PC area doctor.

Staying Healthy

- Hygiene issues such as boiling water to drink, clean toilet, food storage, bathing, and so on.
- Cooking and meals.

Personal Safety

- Going out at night, walking alone—what is safe, what is dangerous?
- Informing host family of whereabouts.

Sample Orientation Topics

Host Country Cultural Values and Norms as Compared to U.S. Culture

- Typical behaviors, attitudes, values.
- Sense of time and space.
- Appropriate dress (around the house, for leisure, for work, and for specific events).
- Male/female relationships and behavior.
- Misinterpretation of the need for privacy and independence.

Feeling at Home

- Describe the cycle of cultural adjustment (see *Culture Matters Workbook*, Chapter 6) and explain that feeling homesick or depression is normal and to be expected.
- House rules and particularities (i.e., whether there is only one set of keys, whether laundry is done only on certain days of the week, etc.).
- Inviting friends into the home (same sex, opposite sex).
- Coming home late.
- Discipline methods for children might be very different than U.S. standards and might be disturbing.
- Trainees should have their own bedroom with their own bed.
- Personal belongings.
- PC has asked host families to respect Trainees' privacy.
- Trainee should initiate interaction—host family does not know when the Trainee needs to be alone or needs company.
- Noise: loud voices, TVs, radios, traffic, and so on.

Strategies for Dealing with Stress

- Take care of yourself (health, safety, rest).
- Seek support.
- Assume control (make choices and decisions).
- Improve communication skills
- Retreat (exercise, read, meet with others, journal writing).

Logistics

- Getting to and from the training center—modes of transportation and allowances.
- Payment procedure for host family reimbursement and Trainees' spending money.
- Who to contact if things are not going well.
- Trainee assessment (see p. 57–60).
- Evaluation (mid-PST, final).

Some countries have found it appropriate to conclude the Trainee orientation session with a demonstration on how to eat, bathe, use local customary toilet or pit latrine, or other specific behaviors they need to know. It may be useful to show Trainees the list of host family expectations of trainees. This helps trainees see what is expected of them from the host family perspective.

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME

As with the host family orientation, the Trainee orientation needs to be interactive and in step with PC training philosophy. Again, asking current Volunteers to do skits about their homestay experience can enlighten the group and make an impression. Ethiopia uses video tapes of a hypothetical Trainee moving into the family and presents typical humorous and challenging situations such as privacy, smoking, and food to stress that Trainees have choices and, therefore, consequences in the ways that they behave. Another effective approach is to involve current Volunteers and their host family members in a panel discussion on their homestay experience. If this approach is taken, be sure to choose Volunteers and their host families that can articulate their experience in a way that the Trainees can learn from. If homes and facilities will be very different from the typical U.S. home, touring a nearby home and learning important cultural information and behaviors may make Trainees more comfortable (see Appendix G for a sample design from Tanzania).

"Living with a host family is a participatory cross-cultural training laboratory."

B. CROSS-CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The homestay experience is rich with opportunities for Trainees to learn about and to adjust to the new culture. Preparing Trainees adequately for the inevitable cultural adjustment they will undergo and making use of all opportunities to learn from their homestay experiences are vital to the success of the PST in general. The homestay coordinator should work closely with the cross-cultural coordinator to develop a strategy to prepare the Trainees for the cross-cultural aspects of the homestay, and the events or receptions with the host families.

The homestay experience, above all other experience, provides trainers with rich opportunities for cross-cultural teaching. Trainers need to look for opportunities to integrate the processing of the homestay experience in all cross-cultural sessions. The Trainer's Guide for *Culture Matters* lists the following list of activities that focus on the homestay.

Homestay Activities from *Culture Matters Workbook*

Cross-Cultural Activity	Activity no., page no.
What Is Culture?	exercise 1.1, 1.5, p.10
Linking Values	p. 13
Universal/Cultural/Personal	exercise 1.7, p. 15
Mind of the Beholder	exercise 1.9, p.20
Fundamentals of Culture I	p. 29
How Non-Americans See Americans	exercise 2.6, p. 56
Styles of Communication	exercise 3.2, p. 78
Nonverbal Communication	exercise 3.7, p. 91
Fundamentals of Culture III	p. 103
Rules of The House	exercise 5.3, p. 156
Family Life	exercise 5.6, p. 166
The Cycle of Adjustment	exercise 6.3, p. 191

Trainers will find the *Culture Matters Trainer's Guide* useful in designing sessions. It is helpful that the Trainees understand that adaptation also takes place within a family. Senegal uses a series of questions about family structure and roles. The following questions can be used in a training session or to stimulate discussion. This creates an awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation in the Trainees once they realize that they are not the only ones adapting.

- What is the average size of the family?
- Do men and women share household responsibilities?
- Do men work outside the home and not in the home?
- What is the power distribution in the marital relationship?

- Are women/men encouraged to obtain an education?
- Who are members of the family? Grandparents? aunts, uncles and their children?
- Are all children considered legitimate with value to the family, or are only children born in wedlock considered legitimate? Boys versus girls? Older versus younger?
- Is religion important in family life?
- Is family communication implicit (high context) or interpreted literally (low context)?
- Is there conflicting communication between the older people and the younger people in the family? Between the men and the women?
- Is there a multi-household model or a nuclear family model?
- Do children identify with peer group reference or achievement?
- Does the family encourage cooperation or competition?

1. GETTING TO KNOW YOU: THE INTRODUCTORY EVENT

The planning of the introductory event for Trainees and host families to meet one another should be developed in conjunction with the cross-cultural coordinator. There is no formula for how the introductory session should take place. Unless the program is small enough that the staff can individually introduce each Trainee to his/her host family, it is important to organize a culturally appropriate way to introduce them. In some countries, it is a formal event where dignitaries speak, the families and Trainees offer gifts, and a meal is served. The event need not be elaborate, but it is an important event to begin a positive and productive cross-cultural exchange between the Trainees and the host families. On the following page begins a sample of an introductory event from PC/Russia West.

Sample Session Plan – Russia West

Host Family Reception

Objective

To introduce Trainees to their host families in an informal setting

Time

1 hour

Materials

27 post-cards cut into two halves, a map of the United States

Delivery

STEP 1. Introduction (15 minutes)

Host families arrive, receive one half of the post card with their last name on it. Go to the dining hall. Meet the Trainees. Help themselves to tea/coffee and snacks, make themselves comfortable.

STEP 2. Welcome (15 minutes)

Greetings to host families. Informal reminder to the families about PC objectives for homestays, medical emergency information, contact telephones.

STEP 3. The Meeting (10 minutes)

Each Trainee introduces herself/himself in Russian, if possible, and points out his/her home on a map of the

SAMPLE SESSION PLAN – RUSSIA WEST

United States. The Trainees get their halves of the post-cards with their names on it, names of the members of the host family, the home address and telephone number (if there is one).

STEP 4. Getting Together (20 minutes)

Each Trainee has to solve the post-card puzzle and find her/his host family. Informal conversation occurs between the Trainee and the host family. Every Trainee previously received food money to give to host families. Those who have transportation with their host families leave with their adopted members. Those who requested transportation continue to converse until it is their turn to go home by PC vehicles.

Involving the host families in the training process as much as possible is important. Host families are usually very enthusiastic to participate and organize different events with Trainees. In Ukraine, host families organize different interest clubs: folk dance, embroidery, volleyball, football, etc. Members of the families organize cultural trips for Trainees to places of interest, such as theaters, exhibitions, museums, and concerts. Host families and Trainees celebrate Ukrainian and American holidays together, which helps to share both cultures and to escape misunderstandings and miscommunications. Host families are also invited to participate in a talent show to not only observe what Trainees have learned during PST, but to show their own talents as well. At the end of training in Ukraine, each host family receives a Cross-Cultural Training Certificate, which is unique and important for Ukranians because they do not have access to such training anywhere else in Ukraine.

"You should see first to better act... everyday the ears go to school."

In addition to the introductory events, joint sessions for families and Trainees can be organized to build the relationship (see Appendix H for Africa design).

2. How Did It Go: Homestay Debriefing

Experience has shown that it is ideal for Trainees to spend at least one full day (for example, leave with their host families at noon and return to the training center the next day at noon), but not more than two days, with their host families before they return to formal training sessions. In addition, it is best if the Trainees return to their host families on a weekend so that they have time to spend together.

After the Trainees' first night or two with their host families, the homestay coordinator and the cross-cultural coordinator should conduct debriefing activities to draw out learning from the experience, and to explore strategies to resolve any problems the Trainees may have encountered.

Because Trainees may be excited, and sometimes emotional at the debriefing, trainers need to be prepared to offer Trainees support, confirm their feelings, and help them develop strategies to understand what is happening, and, if necessary, resolve problems. Breaking the Trainees into small groups with a staff facilitator is an effective way to allow each Trainee the opportunity to discuss his/her particular situation and to find support among the group. Following is a sample of a debriefing activity from Latin America.

Sample Session Plan – Africa Region

Homestay Debriefing

Overview

Trainees have spent their first night(s) with their host families and have individual experiences to share. Since cultural issues emerge, this session is designed to allow Trainees to share their individual experiences.

Goal

To give Trainees an opportunity to share their homestay experience and to identify problem areas, solutions, and strategies with their peers.

Objectives

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

1. identify coping strategies to deal with upcoming cultural issues and inconveniences in their homes and community.
2. identify the process for their cultural adjustment.

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Preparation

Discuss with all facilitators their roles and responsibilities in this session.

SAMPLE SESSION PLAN – AFRICA REGION

MATERIALS

Flip-chart, markers.

DELIVERY

STEP 1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce the session by asking Trainees to congratulate themselves for having accomplished the task of spending the first night(s) with their families. Give them the rationale and objectives of this session.

STEP 2. Small Group Discussions (40 minutes)

Explain to Trainees that each person is given the opportunity to talk about his/her experiences. The following four statements are examples taken from the Africa Region Homestay Program Training Design booklet.

Statement 1: Someone in your community has been constantly making remarks that you find offensive. This person has repeatedly followed you around. You feel uncomfortable and are not sure as to what action should be taken.

Statement 2: Anytime you're in your room, a bunch of kids walk in to hang out. Either you're reading, studying, or writing letters, and they come in without knocking at the door. You feel very disturbed by these visits, and you'd like to be able to find some private time for yourself. You want to take action to resolve this problem.

Statement 3: Almost every day your host mother finds a way to ask you in private for money. She always has an excuse. For example, to buy soap for the household laundry, or to buy more food for the family, etc. You know, however, Peace Corps is giving her enough money for hosting you. You don't want this situation to continue and are planning to take action to resolve this problem.

SAMPLE SESSION PLAN – AFRICA REGION

Statement 4: Your family has been serving you meals in your room where you eat alone. Some of the food you really can't tolerate because of your beliefs. They also serve you more than you want to eat. You feel like you should show them that you like and appreciate the food they have been serving you. You're working toward finding an appropriate solution to the problem.

Break them into five groups of seven; include two facilitators for each group. Encourage them to share their observations with one another. Facilitators should guide the discussions so that one Trainee does not dominate the discussion, and lead them back to specific observational examples when they are tempted to generalize. (See *Culture Matters Trainer's Guide* p. 84.)

STEP 3. Cultural Adjustment (30 minutes)

Give each person two minutes to reflect or think about his/her feelings. As they think about their feelings, they should join the large group. Present the "Process of cultural adjustment" (See *Culture Matters Trainer's Guide* p. 84.).

STEP 4. Conclusion (15 minutes)

Questions, answers, and wrap-up.

Posts should conduct some sort of debriefing activity the first time Trainees return together. If such an activity is not facilitated, the Trainees will spontaneously take valuable time from other sessions to discuss their experiences informally. Furthermore, they may draw inappropriate conclusions and make unfortunate judgments: this debriefing is a key learning moment. Their need to discuss things may be great and could necessitate additional debriefing sessions. Some posts have more than one homestay debriefing activity: the day the Trainees return, three days later, and a week after the Trainees go to live with their host families.

Posts should develop cross-cultural sessions around the homestay, and periodically check in with the Trainees about their homestay experience in training community meetings. Additionally, PST technical trainers can use the homestay experience in their training sessions. For example, agriculture Trainees might work with the host family in their garden, or health Trainees might conduct a survey of the health and sanitation conditions of their homestay community. The homestay community is also a venue for appropriate special projects and practicums.

C. LANGUAGE FACTORS

PeopleLink, a U.S. nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a global neighborhood states,". . .experts estimate that two weeks of living with people whose language is different from one's own is roughly equivalent to six months in the classroom." Since language acquisition is a primary goal of PST, host families should speak the target, and, if possible, and should not speak English, unless, of course, English is the target language.

"Homestay is good because you can make cultural mistakes without feeling bad about it."

The Peace Corps teaches the vernacular. The goal is to help Trainees speak the language as soon as possible, not necessarily to write and read the language. Often Trainees find that the difference between formal language and conversational language becomes a challenge with their host family. Some host families may take their role in the Trainees' language acquisition very seriously, and may be distressed that they are not learning "educated" language patterns. This may lead the host family to teach the Trainee the formal language (or perhaps a dialect), giving the Trainee drills, and constant corrections. This may make the Trainee feel uncomfortable and anxious about practicing the language. It is important to explain in the host family orientation that the Peace Corps would like the host families to help the Trainees practice communicating as they are being taught in training and not to feel responsibility for teaching the Trainee more or different forms of the language.

"...It also alleviates the fear of going to their assignment sites."

It is common for Trainees to become the "English teachers" for the host families. This can be problematic—especially if children are in the home. Trainees can help family members with their English, it is after all a cultural exchange. The families need to be clear, however, that the main goal of the homestay program is for Trainees to learn about the local culture and the target language to be successful during their two years of service in the host country. A general rule is that the use of English should be limited, unless it is unavoidable or essential for the Trainee's well-being.

The homestay offers the language instructors a good opportunity to integrate classroom learning with Trainees' real life experiences. The Homestay Language Activities Chart below is from the Language Coordinator's Resource Kit. The chart, developed by LCs at Asia-Pacific posts, describes the effectiveness of several village-based or homestay-based activities. Most of the activities are considered effective, however, some may be more effective for certain types of learners or age groups.

HOMESTAY LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES CHART

Activity	Effectiveness	Why
Assignments a. Family Tree b. Names of local food	 Effective Effective	 Provides opportunity to get to know each other. Provides focus to homestay.
Attend religious service.	Effective	Learns culture, certain behavior patterns, learns more language and builds listening skills.
Read assignments given to Trainees in English (e.g. health textbook)	Ineffective	Does not build language skills or cross-cultural skills and separates the Trainee from host family interactions.
Trainee read simple written materials to members of the host family.	Effective	Uses language in risk-free situation.
Story telling.	Effective	Able to practice language and use new vocabulary. Provides cultural exchange.
Show trainee's family photos to host family.	Effective	Method for providing information to host family. Trainees like to discuss their family; it makes them feel good.
Participate in informal gatherings.	Effective	Adds to vocabulary bank and cross-cultural experience.
Walk around the village, meet villagers.	Effective	Gets a better understanding of all village life, increases observational ability.
Village games/sports	Effective	Makes friends, learn commonly used phrases and expressions.
K- kinship E- education E- economics P- politics R- religions A- associations H- health, human, history D- development Trainees assigned the task to find out information on one of these topics during village stay.	Effective but needs careful support and structure so that people in the community are prepared and valued. Some topics may be personal, or sensitive, or too complex	Gives a reason to talk to people. Helps them understand the community in which they have their homestay.
Learn one simple song or dance	Effective for younger Trainees	Learns new vocabulary, culture.
Teach family games/stories, e.g., Sorry, Go Fish, etc.	Effective	Makes learning fun.

HOMESTAY LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES CHART

Activity	Effectiveness	Why
Participate in family activities: – farming – fishing – feasts and cooking – funerals, weddings – village ceremonies	Very Effective	Participates in daily village life. Experiences real events. Cultural exposure to language as well.
Community Analysis (PRA, PACA, or similar tool)	Effective but must be done with care	Encourages real interactions with villagers to find out information.
Ask Trainees to learn cultural skills, e.g. weave basket, sew dance, fish, cook.	Effective	Gives Trainees a chance to use language learned and also to become involved in cultural exchanges.
Meet other families	Effective	Sees different family learning styles and values.
Scavenger hunt	Effective	Application of language and culture.
Give a farewell speech	Effective	Applies language and cultural knowledge to appropriately give a thank you and farewell speech.
Family Day. Trainee spends one whole day with a host family member, assisting them to do their tasks.	Effective	Experiences the real life of a typical village family. Vocabulary used every day in village is increased.

OTHER POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Trainees find their own way to or from a village.
- Talk to village children.
- Create a village map. (see the PACA Manual and Gender and Development Training Booklet 5, p. 9-18)
- "Shadowing" a woman, man or child for a day to learn daily routines.

More details on these activities may be found in the Language Coordinators Resource Kit, PACA Manual, and the Gender and Development Training Booklets.

VI. Putting It All In Writing: Homestay Program Guidelines

Many posts have developed written homestay guidelines for both host families and Trainees. The guidelines contain similar information, but are written for each specific audience. They cover such topics as the program goals and objectives, health and safety guidelines, PC expectations, and emergency contact information. The booklets are given to all Trainees, are usually written in English, and may include a section on survival language. The booklets for host families are usually written in the target language and may include survival English. These booklets are given out at the orientation sessions. The following outline, from Turkmenistan, is what the homestay booklet for Trainees and host families might contain.

GENERAL GUIDELINE OUTLINE – TURKMENISTAN

HOST FAMILY AND TRAINEE GUIDELINES

About the Peace Corps

- History and Purpose
- Three Goals
- History of PC in country.
- Description and role of the Volunteer.

About the Host Family Program

- Policies regarding Trainees or Volunteers, such as leaving the country, driving/riding cars or motorcycles, drug/alcohol use, notification of PC if taking Trainee or Volunteer out of town, expectation that Trainee will attend PST sessions.
- Health and safety requirements outlined by PCMO.
- Administrative procedures: method and schedule of host family reimbursement payments; expenses that should be planned and paid for by Peace Corps.
- Expectations of the Trainee.
- Feedback: Define what feedback is and include tips and techniques on giving feedback to staff, Trainees and Volunteers, including cultural differences, which are important to know.
- Assessment and evaluation: Discuss formal and informal assessment and evaluation, verbal vs. written, frequency, sharing information with trainers, and how to share information with Trainees, and Volunteers.

Special Tips on Trainees/Volunteers and American Culture

Cycle of Cultural Adjustment and Culture Shock

Contact Information:

- Address, phone number, and hours of the PC office.
- Name, address, and telephone number of appropriate staff members.
- Emergency contact information.
- A list of "who to contact if..." type of situations: e.g., after PC hours, illness, Trainee or Volunteer behavior, desire to take Trainee or Volunteer on a family trip out of town, PC policies or purpose, and so on.

Letters from staff and Volunteers (written in the target language, with English translations if possible) stating that the Volunteers ability in local language is a result of help from Host Country National training staff.

Final Acknowledgment and gratitude from Staff and Peace Corps Trainees and Volunteers

(See Appendix I for a sample of the Homestay Booklet for Host Families from Moldova and Appendix J for the Trainee Homestay Guide from Kenya.)

VII. Matching Trainees and Host Families

A. Finding The Fit

Making the most harmonious match between the Trainees and the host families may be one of the most imposing tasks of the entire homestay program. Since making a good match is important for both the Trainee and the host family, collecting useful information about both is essential. One way to collect information is through Trainee and Host Family Questionnaires. The Trainee and Host Family Questionnaires should cover similar areas of interest. For example both groups might be asked about smoking, vegetarianism, pets, children, other languages spoken, and other information that is considered essential and specific to each post. Additionally, host families might be asked if they have room for and would consider taking a married couple, can accommodate a differently abled Trainee, or any other specific needs of the training group. Following are samples of both a Trainee and a Host Family Questionnaire, developed from actual questionnaires used in Bolivia, Tanzania, and the Slovak Republic. Posts will need to modify these samples to fit their own specific, relevant issues.

HOST FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be used to match Trainees and families and to be completed by PST staff member)

Family's Complete Name: _____

Family's Address: _____

Telephone Number (if applicable): _____

1. Names and ages of all members of the household:

2. Do you or does anyone in the household smoke? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Would you object if the Peace Corps Trainee is a smoker? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. The Peace Corps Trainee could be a vegetarian.
   Are you a vegetarian? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   Could you accommodate the needs of a vegetarian in your kitchen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Do you have pets/animals in or around the house? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please list types.

6. List the languages people in your household speak? _____
   What language is spoken most frequently in your house? _____

7. Would your family be able to accommodate the needs of a married couple? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   Would your family be interested in accommodating the needs of a Trainee who is differently abled? (Be specific: deaf, blind, in a wheelchair, etc.)

9. Do you have any religious preferences? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please specify.

10. Are there any questions or points you would like us to know or talk about before assigning you a Trainee?

Thank you!

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TRAINEE QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be completed by Trainees)

A brief request from your training staff:
Your host family is anxious to meet you. As we complete arrangements for your homestay, your answers to the following questions will help us to match you with a host family. We will try to make the best matches possible, although it is not certain that all of your preferences will be met. Please complete this page and return it immediately.

Your complete name: _____

Nickname you want to be called: _____

1. Do you smoke? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Would you object if a member of your host family is a smoker? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Are you a vegetarian? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how strict is your diet?
4. Do you have any special dietary needs or restrictions? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Do you have any other special personal requirements? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please explain.
6. Do you have an allergy to/ problem with any pets or animals? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please list.
7. What languages do you speak fluently? _____
8. ***If available***, would you like a host family with:

very young children?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Doesn't Matter
youngsters (under 12)?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Doesn't Matter
teenagers?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Doesn't Matter
adult siblings?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Doesn't Matter
Host Family adults only?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Doesn't Matter

9. Please comment on your preference for how far a walk/bike ride to and from the training center.
10. Do you have any religious preferences? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify.
11. Any questions or points you would like us to know or talk about before placing you with a host family?

Thank you!

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It is important not to build the expectations of the Trainees or host families by asking too many open ended questions. However, it may be appropriate to ask about the Trainees' previous overseas experience, hobbies, desire to live in a rural/urban area, or any other relevant questions. The important thing is that the questions on the Trainee Questionnaire and the Host Family Questionnaire correspond so that it is easier to match trainees and host families.

Matching should not take place until all the Trainee and Host Family Questionnaires are collected. Following is a list of points to consider when matching Trainees and host families.

1. Trainees with medical concerns might need to be placed the closest to the training center; therefore, it is important to get the PCMO's input as to who should be kept close for medical reasons. Keep in mind confidentiality issues when making, or talking about, these decisions.

"Having been in a family eased me in at my site."

2. Smokers should be placed with families that smoke or those who have indicated they do not mind a Trainee who smokes. Every effort needs to be made to keep a nonsmoker in a nonsmoking household. Avoiding smoke in some cultures is impossible. In these cultures, remove the question about smoking on both questionnaires.

3. Vegetarians need to be placed with families who are either vegetarians or able to make accommodations for vegetarians. Since there are many different types of vegetarians, always advise host families to ask the Trainees what they do and do not eat. Likewise, advise vegetarian Trainees to be specific about their dietary needs. In some cultures, however, vegetarian Trainees may need to be flexible and creative about finding methods to maintain their vegetarianism. Placing vegetarians with a host family who can give them the right food is important to the health of the Trainee.

4. Because senior Trainees may have learned a foreign language in a classroom setting, it is sometimes helpful for them to be placed in host families in which at least one member speaks English. The Homestay Manual from Sri Lanka states that ". . . senior Trainees whose previous experience of language learning is most likely to have been more structural and less 'direct' or 'communicative' need to be the ones placed in bilingual families because 'checking errors' is more important to that older, more traditional way of language learning." (This may apply to other trainees as well.) Additionally, if a Trainee is placed in a host family with an English speaker, the English speaker should be the same sex as the Trainee. For example, a male Trainee should be placed with a host family in which the host father speaks English.

5. When placing married couples, try to keep them together in the same household, and to be sure that the host family is willing and able to host two Trainees. Obviously the couple can share a room, but must have either two small beds or one large bed for the couple to share. The host family will be getting twice the reimbursement for the couple; but, the host family should recognize that hosting a couple means twice as much food and other resources, as well as having two more people in the house.

"Living with a host family is a cross-cultural relationship building mechanism."

Matching Trainees to host families is considered one of the more challenging aspects to coordinating a homestay program. It is not necessary to make matches so that the Trainees and the host family become life long friends; however, the Trainees and the host families should feel comfortable with each another. Matching Trainee and Host Family Questionnaires to complement one another and using common sense will go a long way to make good matches.

B. NOT A PERFECT MATCH

Despite every effort to make good host family and Trainee matches, one or more Trainees will likely have to be moved for some reason. The host family situation may change and they are no longer able to host the Trainee. The Trainee and the host family may have irreconcilable differences—a male Trainee develops an inappropriate relationship with the host mother, a Trainee is not provided food while the host family is pocketing the money. A host father may violently threaten a female Trainee. These are all real life examples that have necessitated moving a Trainee.

Since moving some Trainees to new host families is inevitable, it is important to develop guidelines for relocating Trainees prior to PST so that when situations arise the staff is confident about what action to take. Below is a list of criteria to consider when developing guidelines for moving Trainees from host families.

- security / personal safety
- harassment (harassment is culturally relative—try to find a balance between the U.S. definition of harassment and the host country definition.)
- theft of the Trainee's property
- host family not meeting the selection criteria
- illness of the Trainee or the host family
- logistics—bus schedule changes, too long for the Trainee to walk, and so on.
- inappropriate behavior on the part of the Trainee or host family

If a Trainee must be moved, exercise caution. Convene a meeting with the Trainee and the host family members to discuss the situation. Sometimes the use of a mediator may be culturally appropriate. When a Trainee is moved, the homestay coordinator has the responsibility to help the Trainee learn from the situation and, if possible, see it as a unique situation rather than stereotype people from the host country. Also, if the host family was not at fault, staff should maintain contact so that the host family does not have bad feelings about the Peace Corps and may consider hosting Trainees for following PSTs.

VIII. How Are We Doing?

A. Trainee Assessment

A formal method for assessing each Trainee's suitability for Peace Corps service is a required part of PST according to the Programming and Training System (PATS) Manual.

> *"The Trainee assessment process is intended to allow Trainees and staff to mutually determine if it is in the best interest of the Peace Corps and the Trainee for that person to be sworn in as a Volunteer."*

Thus, like other components of the PST, Trainee participation in the homestay needs to be assessed. The challenge, however, is that, unlike language and technical training, the PST staff has limited opportunity to observe the Trainee at the homestay. The goals of assessing the homestay component of training are to discover any problems the Trainee and host family are having, pinpoint any skills and attitudes the Trainee needs to improve, and identify ways the training staff can help the Trainee attain the objectives of the homestay program. Homestay coordinators recommend that Trainee assessment for the homestay occur three times during PST

and at the same time as the Trainee assessment interviews for the other components of pre-service training.

Prior to each Trainee assessment, the host families need to be contacted and asked to describe how the Trainee is doing, how they have participated in family activities, and if there are problems or concerns. Often issues such as the Trainee coming home late, missing meals, and engaging in inappropriate behavior will surface. These issues/problems can be addressed directly with the Trainee during a Trainee assessment interview.

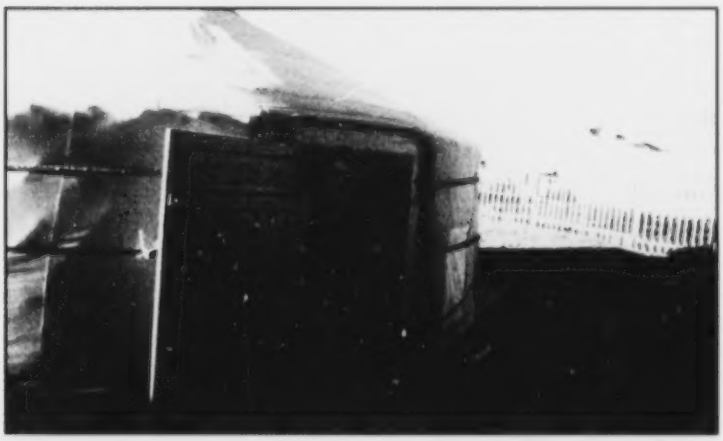
"Homestay brings the U.S. culture to our families."

Likewise, during the interview, the Trainees are asked how they think they are interacting with the host family, what they have been doing with them, and if there are problems or concerns. It is appropriate to ask the Trainees if they are getting enough to eat, if they feel safe, if they have their own room, if they are able to practice the target language, and any other questions regarding the expectations Peace Corps has of the host families.

Even though the homestay orientation for the Trainees and the host families has covered the specifics of what PC expects, points are often missed or forgotten. Some real examples uncovered during assessment interviews include: a female Trainee sharing a room with the adolescent host brother and another Trainee was using his/her own money for food. In both cases, the Trainees were reluctant to say anything because they liked their host families. Addressing the homestay situation formally at regularly scheduled Trainee assessment interviews allows the Trainees to bring up and work towards resolving issues without feeling awkward.

The Trainees and the host families may have different views of how things are going. Yet, when problems exist, Trainees do not like to think that they are not doing well in their homestay. Rather than rank Trainees (for example, on a scale from 1 to 5), simply state whether the Trainee is meeting or not meeting the expectations set forth by Peace Corps for the homestay. If the Trainee is not meeting the expectations, the homestay coordinator needs to be very specific about why and help the Trainee develop strategies for meeting those expectations.

For example, a Trainee was continually returning to the homestay late and spending little or no time with the host family. The host family prepared meals that the Trainee continually missed and waited up at night for the Trainee to come home. The Trainee did not know that the host family was doing this. Once told, the Trainee regretted the behavior and began to spend more time with the host family. All situations may not work out as well, but such situations my be discovered and resolved by assessing the homestay.



"Homestay is one way of achieving two of the the three Peace Corps goals."

Because of the private nature and the closeness of the relationships developed between Trainees and host families, staff needs to be careful about passing judgment or criticizing the Trainee's experience. For this reason clear guidelines for assessment must be developed. The PATS manual recommends that Trainees be involved in the development of the specific indicators against which they will be assessed. It would be appropriate to facilitate a session during the Trainee orientation that interactively addresses the specific indicators used for homestay assessment. As a basis for the development of the specific indicators for each post, the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes are offered as suggestions.

Trainee Assessment Indicators for the Homestay Component

By living with a host family, the Trainee should develop:

A knowledge of:

- The host country life style.
- Family relationships in the host country (roles of men, women, the elderly, children, and family structure).
- Community life in the host country.
- Arts and culture.
- Rituals and celebrations (birthdays, weddings, funerals, rites of passage).
- Holidays and festivals.

Skills in:

- Remaining safe and healthy in the community.
- Maintaining a household in the host country.
- Using public transportation and communication systems.
- Social etiquette (greetings, eating and drinking customs, dress customs, bathing and personal hygiene, being a guest, gift giving and receiving, and so on).
- Dealing with the stress of living with a family.
- Flexibility with self, others and circumstances

An attitude of:

- Openness to a new experience.
- Respect for the host country culture and people.
- Sensitivity to other people's culture, values, and ideas.
- Willingness to learn about the host country culture and language.

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B. Review To Improve: Program Evaluation

When developing the evaluation tool for the homestay program, it is important to consider what information is needed to improve and enhance it for future PSTs. Several data collection methods for evaluation may be used, including written, verbal, or observation. Written data can be collected by a questionnaire in which questions are posed as multiple choice, a scale (either ranking scale or rating scale), or open ended questions. A questionnaire is the method most commonly used by current homestay programs. Although the questionnaire is the method that Trainees and staff are most familiar with, there are other ways to collect valuable data for evaluation. Such information collection should keep in mind Privacy Act issues, and should not identify individual trainees.

Verbal data can be collected in the form of individual interviews, group discussions, or focus groups. Of these methods, the interview is often used in conjunction with a questionnaire as a follow-up with the Trainee or host family to get more specific information or to clarify written data.

"Homestay should be seen as a participatory approach to cross-cultural training for PCVs to start effectively gaining cultural fluency."

Because of the private nature of the homestay experience, collecting consistent and accurate data on the program through observation is difficult. However, it is possible to observe such activities/actions as a Trainee spending most evenings in the local bar and continually returning home late to his/her host family, or a Trainee telling others about the fun he/she has with his/her host family. These are examples of observable situations from the homestay, but they do not yield enough information to make an accurate

assessment of the individual Trainee's homestay experience, or the program as a whole.

With this assessment limitation in mind, a combination of evaluative methods is suggested. Evaluative data should be collected at least two times, at mid-PST and at the end. Evaluative data needs to be collected from Trainees, host families, and staff. The Paraguay post for example, uses a family counselor system among training staff which coordinates formal visits to families during the 1st, 4th, and 8th weeks of training.

The mid-PST evaluation is the time to find out further how the Trainees and the families are getting long, and to help resolve any problems that may surface. It is also a time to solicit training topics that might help the Trainees and host families enhance their experience. (It is suggested to have a training session in which the host families and Trainees are brought together to discuss and process their experiences.) Following are samples of mid-PST evaluation questions for Trainees, host families, and staff.

Trainee Mid-PST Evaluation Questions
(adapted from Peace Corps Kenya)

(To be completed by Trainees either in writing or by individual interview.)

1. How many people can communicate with you in some English?

   Adults _____ Children _____

2. Are you encouraged / assisted in studying and speaking the target language at your homestay?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does your host family speak the target language to each other while you are with them?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Does your host family provide you with a light to study?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Comment on the quantity and potability of the water at your homestay.

6. Comment on the meals—breakfast and dinner—are you getting enough and are they nutritious?

7. Do you have security concerns within your home or in your immediate community? If yes, describe.

8. What are some things / activities you do to integrate into the family?

9. What are some things the family does to make you feel at home?

10. What are the strengths of your homestay experience?

11. What are the weaknesses of your homestay experience?

12. Do you have any suggestions for training topics that might help in your homestay?

HOST FAMILY MID-PST EVALUATION QUESTIONS

(To be translated to the target language and completed by the host family in writing or by individual interview.)

1. Does your Trainee speak the target language with you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Does your Trainee follow the rules of your house (coming home on time, telling you of his/her whereabouts, helping with household chores, and so on)?

3. What are some things/activities your Trainee does to integrate into the family?

4. What are some things you do to make your Trainee feel at home?

5. What are the strengths of your homestay experience?

6. What are the weaknesses of your homestay experience?

7. Do you have any suggestions for training topics that might help for your Trainee?

8. What, if any, training do you feel would be helpful for you?

9. List any other comments or suggestions.

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Staff Mid-PST Evaluation Questions

(To be complete by staff members in writing or by individual interview.)

1. From your point of view, what is working well about the homestay program in this PST?

2. What is not working well?

3. What suggestions do you have to improve the current program?

4. What suggestions do you have for training topics to be addressed before this PST ends?

After the mid-PST evaluations are completed, it is important to analyze the information and to respond to any concerns, problems, and training topics that surface. All training staff need to know the result of these mid-PST evaluations and be encouraged to make changes in their training plans, where necessary, to better meet the needs of the Trainees as well as homestay families.

The purpose of collecting data at the end of PST is to examine the homestay program design to improve it, to ensure that problems have been addressed, to plan for the next PST, and to identify possible families that might be interested in hosting a Trainee again. This final evaluation of the homestay program should be part of the Trainees' overall PST evaluation. To have complete information, host families and staff should be given the opportunity to evaluate the program as well. Following are samples of final evaluation questions for Trainees, host families and staff.

Trainee Final Evaluation Questions
(adapted from Peace Corps Ecuador)

(To be complete by Trainees in writing or by individual interview.)

1 In my host family I felt I was treated as:

☐ a member of the family ☐ a boarder ☐ a guest

2. The food in my host family was:

☐ very good ☐ satisfactory ☐ not very good

3. I was able to practice my Spanish with them:

☐ a lot ☐ sufficiently ☐ not enough

4. They gave me enough time to study:

☐ plenty of time ☐ it was O.K. ☐ never enough

5. I felt I was included in their lives:

☐ almost all the time ☐ some of the time ☐ hardly ever

6. I felt they understood what I was here for:

☐ pretty well ☐ rough idea ☐ no idea

7. The main good points were:

8. My main problem/difficulty was:

9. Do I have suggestions? Yes, here they are:

10. As far as future Trainees staying with my host family, I:

☐ highly recommend ☐ recommend ☐ do not recommend

11. Other comments:

HOST FAMILY FINAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

(To be translated to the target language and completed by the host family either in writing or by individual interview.)

1. Did you enjoy having a Peace Corps Trainee in your home? Why and why not?

2. Did you feel well prepared by the Peace Corps to host a Trainee? If not, how could Peace Corps have better prepared you to host a Trainee?

3. What other training topics might be added to better prepare host families next time?

4. Looking at the Peace Corps homestay program in general, what were the strengths of the program?

5. What were the weaknesses?

6. Would your family be interested in hosting a Peace Corps Trainee again?

7. Please list any other comments or suggestions.

Staff Final Evaluation Form

(To be complete by staff members in writing or by individual interview.)

1. From your point of view, what worked well about the homestay program in this PST?

2. What did not work well?

3. What suggestions do you have for the next training class?

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In Tanzania, Volunteers are sent the following homestay evaluation three months after PST ends.

Hi folks,

Hello. Habari

Now that you have started your new life at your site. I would like you to reflect back on your homestay during PST. I know it is a long time ago but memories are always still there. Your suggestions and recommendations will help us to plan, recruit, and prepare host families for the next training cycle.

1. In what way(s) did your homestay help you to understand the culture that now surrounds you?

2. What aspects came as a surprise to you?

3. What helped your comprehension of the language?

4. What helped you to prepare a balanced diet in your new home?

5. What helped to prepare you for the day-to-day living arrangements of your site?

6. In terms of overall site adjustment, do you think your host family experience was beneficial?

7. In retrospect, what questions should have been asked of homestay families when interviewing them before you arrived?

8. What were the three most important characteristics of your homestay experience?

9. Did you find your homestay experience to be comfortable? If not, why?

10. Will you go back and visit the family again? If not why?

11. Do you think living with your host family has helped you to start living at your site in general?

12. What do you suggest we should focus on in selecting host families?

13. Do you advise/suggest your family be involved in the next training cycle? If yes, what specific suggestion(s) for improvement with this particular host family?

14. Were there challenges you faced while at your homestay that need to be addressed before another Trainee is placed with them?

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These questions may be used to design mid-PST and final evaluation forms specific to each country's program. Linking the evaluation questions to the specific expectations of the Trainees and host families will help to make the purpose of the questions clear. As demonstrated in the previous questions, staff questions should be open-ended.

After the final evaluations are completed, it is important to analyze the information and document lessons learned for the benefit of future homestay programs in the country. Detailed records should be kept for review during the planning stage for the next PST.

IX. CONCLUSION

The homestay program can be a productive aspect of PST for Trainees in terms of language acquisition and the development of cultural adaptation skills. However, if not managed well, it can be a challenging and demoralizing experience for both Trainees and staff. Developing a detailed timeline and clear staff roles and responsibilities, processing the Trainees' experiences adequately, as well as selecting and training appropriate host families will help to ensure the program is a success.

Yet, even with the very best planning and management of a homestay program, concerns occur. Although homestay programs throughout the Peace Corps world vary tremendously, some common problems surface.

Following is a list of these common concerns and an area for you to write possible solutions.

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH PC HOMESTAY PROGRAMS

Common Problem	Possible Solution
• General cross-cultural misunderstandings.	
• Misunderstandings due to American English versus British English.	
• Issues about American diversity and the acceptance of Trainees outside the host country's stereotypical idea of American—people of color, seniors, differently abled, Trainees that have a language other than English as their primary language, sexual orientation, religion, and so on.	
• Suspicion as to the Trainee's motivation for being in country.	
• AIDS and sexually transmitted disease concerns.	
• Privacy and independence—the Trainees' need for both and the host families feelings about them.	
• Food—skipping meals, not coming home for meals, being forced to eat, not enough provided.	
• Trainees staying out later than the host family wishes.	
• Trainees see family as a sleeping place only.	
• PST schedule—too demanding with not enough free time for the host families to spend with the Trainees, especially on the weekends.	
• TV—loud noise and commotion around the TV, the TV constantly on, the host family taking the characters in programs literally and developing stereotypes about Americans.	
• Trainees dressing inappropriately.	
• Trainees of the opposite sex visiting one another against the host families wishes.	
• Burn out issues: potential for host family burn out, or community burnout especially in a CBT model.	
• The host family wanting the Trainee to arrange jobs, visas, green cards, merchandise, and marriages for them.	
• Money issues: host family view the Trainee as a "rich American", disparity of wealth of host families.	

Some of these problems may be addressed in training; however, when managing so many people, it is inevitable that some problems will occur. The fact that these problems surface all over the world, in dramatically diverse cultures, indicates that perhaps they are inherent to the experience of living in host families.

The homestay coordinator's role is not to make each Trainee and host family perfectly happy and in love with each other, but to provide an experience, unlike any other, from which Trainees, and host families, can learn to live together in peace, and grow facing their problems. This is the very special position that homestay coordinators have and the very special role that the homestay experience plays in the development of Trainees into Volunteers. The host family experience is an essential component of Peace Corps training and a vital step in cross-cultural adaptation and effectiveness as a Volunteer. The host family helps the Trainee make the transition to the local culture.

"Homestay programs systematically plan for the development of skills and independence during training."

X.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AC Administrative Coordinator

AO Administrative Officer

APCD Associate Peace Corps Director

CBT Community Based Training

CD Country Director

HCN Host Country National

ICE Information Collection and Exchange

LC Language Coordinator

LCTC Language/Cultural Training Coordinator

LI Language Instructor

PACA Participatory Analysis for Community Action

PATS Programming And Training System

PC Peace Corps

PCMO Peace Corps Medical Officer

PCT Peace Corps Trainee

PCV Peace Corps Volunteer

PD Project Director

PM Program Manager

PRA Participatory Rapid Appraisal

PST Pre-Service Training

TA Training Assistant

VAD Volunteer Assignment Description

Appendix B: Timing and Duration of Trainees' Homestay by Country

Worldwide, the average length of homestay was 4.6 weeks in 1995 and 9.5 weeks in 1999.

Region – Africa		
Post	**Homestay Starting Week**	**No. of Homestay Weeks**
Benin	2nd	11
Burkina Faso	1st	12
Cameroon	1st	10
Cape Verde	1st	9
Cote d'Ivore	1st	9
Ethiopia	1st	10
Gabon	1st	10
Ghana	1st	14
Guinea	day 3	12
Kenya	1st	11
Lesotho	4th	4
Madagascar	3rd	3
Malawi	2nd	4
Mali	2nd	10
Mauritania	day 3	12
Namibia	1st	8-9
Niger	1st	11
Senegal	1st	8-9
South Africa	4th	6
Tanzania	1st	9
The Gambia	1st	10
Togo	1st	7
Uganda	1st	10
Zambia	2nd	9
Zimbabwe	1st	8

Summary

Homestay Starting Week:

N	Week
16	1
3	2
1	3
1	4

Average stay: 9.1 weeks

Note to Chart: N = number of posts

REGION – EASTERN EUROPE, MEDITERRANEAN AND ASIA (EMA)		
Post	**Homestay Starting Week**	**No. of Homestay Weeks**
Armenia	2nd	11
Bangladesh	2nd	12
Bulgaria	1st	11
China (People's Republic of...)	0	0
Estonia	2nd	11
Macedonia	1st	12
Jordan	2nd	12
Kazakstan	1st	11
Kyrgyzstan	2nd	8
Latvia	2nd	11
Lithuania	2nd	11
Moldova	1st	11
Mongolia	2nd	8
Morocco	8th	2
Nepal	2nd	11
Philippines	2nd	16
Poland	1st	11
Romania	1st	11
Russia East	2nd	7-10
Slovakia	1st	11
Thailand	1st	12
Turkmenistan	3rd	8
Ukraine	1st	11
Uzbekistan	1st	11

Summary

Homestay Starting Week:

N	Week
12	1
7	2
1	3
3	7, 8, 9

Average Stay: 10.5 weeks

Region – Inter America and the Pacific (IAP)

Post	Homestay Starting Week	No. of Homestay Weeks
Belize	2nd	5
Bolivia	1st	12
Costa Rica	2nd	12
Dominican Republic	1st or 2nd day	12
Eastern Caribbean	1st	6
Ecuador	1st	12
El Salvador	1st	12
Guatemala	1st	8
Guyana	1st	8
Haiti	2nd	10
Honduras	day 3	12
Jamaica	1st	6
Kiribati	2nd	9
Micronesia (FSM)	1st	10
Nicaragua	2nd	12
Niue	2nd	9
Panama	4	12
Papua New Guinea	2nd	6
Paraguay	1st	12
Samoa	2nd	9
Solomon Islands	3rd	4
Suriname	1st	7
Tonga	1st	6
Vanuatu	2nd	6

Summary

Homestay Starting Week:

N	Week
12	1
9	2
1	3

Average stay: 8.9 weeks

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APPENDIX C: SAFETY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

SAMPLE – ZAMBIA

TRAINEES' SECURITY

(Taken from "Cultural Exchange Program with Zambian Families: A Guide to Homestay Families")

Apart from teaching Zambian Culture, our basic responsibility is Trainees' security within families and in town. This security is about the Trainees' themselves and personal property . The family should advise the Trainee on how to be secure. It should create a security system to prevent loss or theft of Trainees' property. Trainees' morale and physical health should be the primary concern of the family. The best way to avoid surprises is to establish an open, permanent dialogue between family and Trainee. It is useful to tell him/her how to get around at night.

It is important to keep in mind that sexual harassment must be avoided. The host family should be clear about this with friends and neighbors. In fact, the neighborhood should help the family in its protection system of the Trainee. It is probably a good thing to note that the harassment concept does not mean the same thing in America and Africa. For Americans simple advances or strong interest in a man or woman may mean harassment. In Africa people may touch each other when talking; in America this may imply physical harassment, particularly if the people involved belong to the opposite sex. On the other hand, to speak loudly or scold someone may be a verbal harassment. Thus telling an American that you wish to marry her or find a husband for her may seem like verbal harassment.

SAMPLE – UKRAINE

HOST FAMILY STAY POLICIES

(from Ukraine's "Host Family Handbook")

The following are Host Family Stay Policies:

- A Ukrainian family may host a Trainee two PSTs in a row, then—one PST break, then one more PST, then two PSTs—break, and then the family may apply again. In general a family may host a trainee three times, and then if the recommendation given by a trainee is positive, the family may apply one more time.

- If the host family is not meeting the Peace Corps requirements (the facilities are not appropriate; the family is not culturally sensitive, there is excessive drinking; etc.) the host family coordinator and

training director may move the trainee to another family so that the rest of the trainee's experience in Ukraine is positive. For such cases, we have HFs in reserve.

- The families in reserve are mostly families that worked with the Peace Corps in the past, and were highly motivated to share Ukrainian culture and languages (Ukrainian or Russian) as well as to understand and learn American culture. These families understand Peace Corps philosophy and commit themselves to work with us. They participated actively in training: HF meetings and cross-cultural sessions; cared about trainee's well-being and his/her achievements in studying language, technical skills, cross-cultural sensitivity; organized clubs of interests for Trainees; participate in cross-cultural events organized by themselves for Trainees and staff, Talent Show, etc.

- If there are any problems with a Trainee in the family, there is an appropriate procedure of counseling with the host family coordinator and training director in order to check the Trainee's process of cross-cultural adaptation and reasons to stay in the country.

- If the host family violates the contract signed with Peace Corps and the responsibilities discussed with the HF coordinator, such a family has no right to reapply.

- If a Trainee early terminates we don't count the PST for the family, and they can apply for the next PST.

- Families interested in hosting a Trainee need to fill out an application form, which they can receive from the host family coordinator only.

A host family database exists. It includes all the host families who worked with us at different PSTs. The database is updated continually by the HF coordinator. Only certain people at the training—cross-cultural/HF coordinator, training manager, cross-cultural/HF assistant and administrative assistant have access to the HF database, since all the information in the database is confidential. The HF coordinator also maintains a list of host families that cannot be with us any more due to a violation of the contract.

SAMPLE – CAMEROON AND TOGO

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST

(Adapted from Peace Corps Cameroon and Togo materials)

Location

- ☐ Distance from training center to the homestay:
- ☐ What kind of topography exists in the area? (forest, savanna, flat, hilly)
- ☐ How near or far are the surrounding villages?
- ☐ What is the approximate population of the village?
- ☐ What is the overall "look and feel" of the community?
- ☐ Is there a market/store in the village?

Culture

- ☐ What are the main ethnic groups in the area?
- ☐ What languages are spoken in this area?
- ☐ What are the major religious groups in the area?
- ☐ What are the major economic activities for people in the area?
- ☐ What are the main subsistence and cash crops in the area?
- ☐ What "traditions" exist in this community?
- ☐ What is the staple food?

Transportation

- ☐ Describe road conditions and their seasonal variability. (Are the roads passable in all seasons?):
- ☐ What kind of transportation is used in the village/town?
- ☐ How often are these available? Are they reliable?
- ☐ How often do taxis and buses run from the homestay to the training center?
- ☐ How many hours does the trip from the homestay to the training center take on average?
- ☐ Would the terrain and distance allow Trainees to walk or commute by bike to the training center?
- ☐ What do people in the community do when the regular means of transport are not available or for emergencies?

Infrastructure

- ☐ Is there electricity? If so, how many hours/day?
- ☐ How far is it to the nearest post office?
- ☐ What are the names and locations of banks in the area?
- ☐ Is there phone service?

SAMPLE – CAMEROON AND TOGO

- ☐ If yes, list names and telephone numbers for those people/organizations willing to relay messages to Trainees.
- ☐ If there is no phone service, is there easy access to a radio?
- ☐ If yes, list names of people/organizations in the area and their frequencies that can be contacted by radio.
- ☐ What is the best way to communicate in case of an emergency?

Housing

- ☐ Where in the community is the house located?
- ☐ What is the design of the house?
- ☐ What are the toilet/latrine facilities and where are they located?
- ☐ What are the bathing facilities and where are they located?
- ☐ Are the toilet and bathing facilities private?
- ☐ What is the drinking water source for the house and where is it located?
- ☐ What are the kitchen facilities and where are they located?
- ☐ How is the Trainee's room furnished?

Health

- ☐ What is the name and location of nearest medical facility?
- ☐ How far away from the homestay is the nearest medical facility?
- ☐ Has this medical facility been used by Peace Corps in the past?
- ☐ Who should the host family/Trainee contact in case of an emergency?
- ☐ Do all windows have protection from bugs and animals such as screens?

Safety

- ☐ Does the community have a reputation of being safe?
- ☐ Have any crimes been reported in the area in the past year?
- ☐ Is there a security guard or a guard dog?
- ☐ Is the house in a compound? stands alone? Isolated?
- ☐ Is the house enclosed by a fence?
- ☐ Do all doors and windows have secure locks?
- ☐ Are there locks on the Trainee's bedroom door?
- ☐ What are the walls built of: cement, mud, burnt bricks, wood, thatch?
- ☐ Who does the Trainee inform of his/her absence from house?
- ☐ If there is a fire in the house, what does the Trainee do?
- ☐ Is there a fire extinguisher in the house?

Sample – Zambia

Responsibilities of the Homestay Coordinator

The homestay coordinator must contact the families interested in hosting Trainees. With the advice of the Peace Corps doctor or nurse and help of the master of training, he/she should choose the families that present the best conditions to host a Trainee. The coordinator should visit families at their houses before the Trainees arrive.

When families first come to the training center, it is the Coordinator's responsibility to introduce the Trainees to their host families.

The homestay coordinator has to discuss with both parties, Trainees and families, the importance of the cultural exchange program. It is the responsibility of the homestay coordinator to settle the trainees into the families' homes.

Function and Responsibilities of the Homestay Liaison

The homestay liaison is a language trainer; this staff member links families to the Training Center. He/she creates and maintains good relationships with families and the training center. The homestay liaison's responsibilities are:

1. To regularly visit the families and talk about both parties' evaluation of their adaptation. The visits must be more regular at the beginning of the training to help family and Trainee's integration and adaptation.
2. To keep open communication channels with the Trainee and family throughout the training. Talks should concentrate on the well-being and progress of the trainee.
3. Have informal talks with the Trainee.
4. To be able to comment on the Trainees' cultural adaptability during sessions on Trainees' evaluation.
5. To contact other appropriate resources connected to the Trainees' stay within families. These resources include the homestay coordinators and director of training.
6. The facilitator is an advisor, a support, and a cultural guide to both family and trainee.
7. To evaluate the family and Trainee at the end of training.

Appendix D: Responsibilities of the Homestay Coordinator and Liaison

(Taken from "Cultural Exchange Program with Zambian Families: A Guide to Homestay Families")

8. In some cases, the facilitator may have to move a Trainee from one family to another, because his/her stay in the first family becomes impossible. In the following cases, a transfer must take place: harassment of Trainee, lack of security, theft of Trainee's property, bad relationship between family and Trainee. In any case, such a decision must be made after consultations between Trainee, host family, and master of training. Therefore, the homestay liaison is the trainer whose role is to resolve the problems in collaboration with coordinators.

Sample – Zambia

Appendix E: Cultural Tips About Americans

The Trainee is a new member of the family who should be taken as such. But it is useful to know that the way a family member is treated in the United States is different from the African or Zambian way. For instance, American society values equality in the relationship between a man and a woman.

The Trainee may be ill at ease if the homestay family deals with him/her as if he/she were a child. The Trainee should be asked for his/her opinion on every subject. Americans sometimes feel at ease when others show trust by explaining their lifestyles, likes, and dislikes. They may ask for privacy, and as most of them have lived an independent life for a long time, adaptation to family life may therefore take a long time. It is a process which requires patience, understanding and flexibility from both parties. Sometimes a Trainee will want to be alone in his/her room. It does not mean he/she does not want to stay with the family in the sitting room or is unhappy about something. There may be a time when he/she wants to be alone, to think about his/her life. It may also mean that he/she wants to relax or work.

Host families should not be surprised if Trainees want to go out at night. To engage in his/her private life, a Trainee may go out at night to meet his/her comrades. The only thing the family has to do is to explain to the Trainee where there seems to be danger at night when coming home too late. On the other hand, the Trainee may want to have visitors in her/his room; it is the responsibility and understanding of the family to establish the criteria of respect in the reception of friends. What is important is the openness that must exist between family and Trainee. Family and Trainee should know the likes and dislikes of each other.

- Americans like to have their privacy. They may wish to spend time in their room alone or go out in the evening.
- Americans like to spend time with their fellow Trainees. Training can be very stressful. They need to share their experiences with other Americans. They may wish to have a drink with the other Trainees after leaving the training center and before returning to their family.
- Americans, especially young Americans, will often skip meals for various reasons. If they are not eating a lot, it does not always mean that they do not like Zambian food.

- Americans are very independent people. Many young Americans have already left their families to stay in houses of their own. It may take some time for these Americans to adjust to living with a family again.

- Americans are very informal people.

Sample - Turkmenistan

One of the goals of Peace Corps is for Trainees to learn about Turkmenistan and its various cultures. This takes time, knowledge of the language, and a great deal of patience. The same is true for families who have expressed a desire to learn about American culture and traditions. In order to help you as well as the Trainee, we feel it is important to mention characteristics and values that many Americans have.

- The most important thing to understand about Americans is probably their devotion to "individualism." They have been trained since very early in their lives to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies. The American Trainee is accustomed to being independent and making his/her own decisions.

- Privacy is important to an American. Americans assume that people "need some time to themselves" or "some time alone" to think about things or recover their physical and/or psychological energy. Your Trainee will most likely spend a great deal of time by themselves preparing for classes, as well as reading and writing letters to his/her friends and family in the United States.

- We especially want to mention possible emotions that Trainees may experience. As they recently arrive in a new country and culture, they may have periods of homesickness or be overwhelmed by feelings due to all the changes, frustration communicating because of language limitations and their confusion with the new culture. They may want to spend time alone thinking or writing letters. Please don't feel offended if the Trainee closes the door to his/her room, and please knock on the door before entering. For Americans, this is sign of respect. Families should not take a Trainee's behavior personally.

- Americans generally consider themselves to be frank, open and direct in their dealings with other people. They say "Let's lay our cards on the table." Try to be as honest and direct as possible with your Trainee. Please, tell him/her about family rules and norms. Let him/her know what time is appropriate to come home in the evening.

- In contrast to Turkmen diet, Americans are accustomed to a diet which is low in fat and meat. They tend to eat more vegetables and prepare foods using little oil, meat, and salt. Please, don't push them to eat if they are not eating a lot, instead give them more freedom in cooking for themselves (note: American males are great cooks as well as females).

- Another difference which exists between Turkmenistan and American cultures concerns relationships between men and women. In America it is common for men and women to be friends. They can easily visit one another's home and "go out" together. It is also acceptable for men and women to date, without an intention to marry each other.

Please, help Trainees understand and respect local traditions and norms. We do not expect families to feel insulted or offended when hosting an American. We do not expect families to change their habits and values for the American. This will only frustrate the family and confuse the Trainee. Remember that while we understand you will care about the American guest and want them to feel comfortable in your home, it is important that they learn customs that will be expected in Turkmenistan. Please, feel free to call the host family coordinator if any concerns arise.

Appendix F:
Trainee Homestay Expectations

Sample – Africa

Homestay Training Module for Staging Introduction to Homestay Program

Overview

This session is designed to give Trainees an introduction to the homestay program. The following types of questions will be addressed: What is a homestay? What can we expect? By describing their past experience of living in a culturally different environment, participants will generate characteristics of a culturally adapted visitor. Participants will then be able to link these characteristics to what they will be experiencing in their host family. The overall goal of this session is to provide a framework for the homestay program.

Objectives

By the end of the session the Trainees will be able to:

1. Identify challenges of homestay programs;
2. Identify and discuss critical issues of homestay intercultural communication; and
3. Discuss homestay programs' cross-cultural framework.

TIME

3 hours

MATERIALS

- Flip chart and markers
- Harry C. Triandis, *Culture Training, Cognitive Complexity and Interpersonal Relationships*, 1975, pp. 37-41

DELIVERY

Climate setting and Introduction: 5 min

Ask: What do you understand is meant by a homestay program? Take 5 or 6 examples and give the Peace Corps definition: a cross-cultural family live-in experience. Why does the Peace Corps use a homestay program? Take another 5 or 6 examples and then link homestay to cross-cultural training. As a linkage to the goals, note that this session is intended to provide a framework for homestays in the host country.

ACTIVITY 1: MOTIVATION

Time: 30 minutes

Guided Imagery:

Explain the activity and give its objective: Challenges and comfort levels in a new culture.

"Close your eyes....Be real loose and make yourself comfortable....Let your imaginations soar....You have the power to do this..."

"It's midnight. You've been in a plane for 8 hours with a group of people you just met 3 days ago....Who are these people?....What do you think of them?....Who will be your friends?"

"Now you are in a bus,...you can't see anything outside the bus....Imagine what's out there....After an hour's drive, you arrive in a village...Imagine the name of the place....What does it look like?"

"There are a lot of people gathered to meet you...Imagine these people....What do they look like?....What are they wearing?....What do they say to you?"

"You wake up the next morning in a hut....Describe the room to yourself....What do you wish it has?....It's hot outside, you hear an unfamiliar noise....What does it sound like?....It's breakfast time, you don't recognize any of the food in front of you....What is it?....What does it smell like?....How do you react to it?

Open your eyes and share your fantasies with two other people next to you. Describe the village, your room, the people, the food and share your feelings about your imagination.

(Allow group 10 min or so to share their views and reflect on them.)

Now ask the large group what challenges they might face in that new village where they will be living for the next 3 months. Write the answers down on a flip chart and take time to discuss these issues.

ACTIVITY 2: INFORMATION

Time needed: 45 minutes

Past experience living in a culturally different environment either in the United States or abroad. (What follows is an example of how this might be done.)

Note to Trainers: If there are enough people in the group who have experienced the above statement, small group work will be possible. If not, use large group sharing.

Small Group Work: 15 minutes

Divide the group into small groups of 8-10 (if group is large enough), or smaller groups of 3-5 (if the group is under 10 people). Group division can follow (for example) a continent division: all participants who lived in Europe will be together and so on. Ask each group to identify someone who will record (on a flip chart) and present the findings to entire group. The comments should reveal major findings—particularly the contrast dimension characteristics below. For instance, if someone says: "Those people were task-oriented," a contextual example should be given to highlight the observation.

Small Group Presentation and Processing:

Allow each group 5 minutes to present their findings. After the presentations take some additional comments from the large group.

Mini-lecturette: Link presentations to high/low context cultures from the work of psychologist Harry C. Triandis, underlying differences between cultures that are related to the contrast between collective (high context) and individualistic (low context) cultures. Use the list below as a check list to complement Trainees' findings. An open-discussion on high/low context cultures should provide "food for thought" to Trainees regarding the high context nature of the culture they will be entering.

High Context	Low Context
Belonging to a group	Individual
Relationship oriented	Task oriented
Interdependence	Independence
Hierarchical	Egalitarian
Ascribed status	Earned status
Being	Doing
Subjugation to nature	Dominance over nature
Cooperative	Competitive
Intuitive	Factual
Time stretches	Planned time
Consistent norms	Multiplicity of norms

BREAK: 10-15 minutes

ACTIVITY 3: PRACTICE

Time needed: 45 minutes

Homestay Intercultural Communication Issues:

This activity consists of a role-play on intercultural communications stressing value-perceptions, cultural behaviors, and coping strategies. Before beginning this session explain their roles to the trainers who will perform the role-play.

Role-Play Scenario:

Explain that the scene takes place in a rural village in the Kambu Republic. Two visitors (outsiders), male and female are invited for lunch by a couple of residents in their house. The couple has two teenage children.

Roles: Explain the roles to the players

a. **The Kambu couple:** Kambu is a male-dominated society where women do all the cooking and other household tasks. They use a variety of nonverbal communication styles. For instance the husband snaps his finger to give orders to his wife and children. The wife does the same when talking to her children. They touch their own heads to express an agreement or to say 'yes', and they touch their backs for the opposite reason. They do not use eye contact and they click their tongues as a sign of appreciation. Women do not shake hands with strangers, they kneel down instead.

   Eating habits: They eat with their right hand around a common bowl on a mat. Before and after eating, the wife pours water on people's hands over a washing bowl using a kettle full of water. Men wash their hands first, followed by women, and then children. They do not eat with their shoes on. After eating they lick their fingers before washing their hands. They do not smell their food. Men squat down to eat and women sit on their heels. They only eat what is in front of them.

b. **The children:** Grab the bowl with their left hands and are not supposed to talk during meals.

c. **Guests:** The woman refuses to wash her hands before eating because she does not think they are dirty. She tries to make conversation with children around the bowl, like asking names, etc. She squats to eat with her shoes on. The man does everything the husband does. He smells food before eating, makes a lot of noise to appreciate the food (Hum, yummy...). He eats from all portions of the bowl.

   The scene starts with the guests coming in. The wife is in the kitchen fixing lunch, and the only time she comes in is to install the mat and bring in the food.

   Before asking Trainers to perform the role play, explain the following observation table to the Trainees. Explain

the headings in the columns and ask them to write down reactions to the role-play.

	Perceptions	Behaviors	Stereotypes	Coping Skills
Husband				
Wife				
Male Guest				
Female Guest				
Children				

Below are some examples of questions that will move participants through the whole experiential learning cycle (ELC): observations (experiences), sharing, interpreting, generalizing, and applying phases.

Observations Sharing:

What did you observe in this role-play?

Were there any surprises? puzzlement?

How did you feel about the different roles?

What were you aware of in this role-play?

Interpreting:

What struck you about this situation?

Does this role-play mean anything to you?

What does that suggest about yourself/ your group?

Generalizing:

What might we draw or understand from this experience?

What does that suggest to you about homestays?

How does this role-play relate to other experiences?

Applying:

How could you apply or transfer your learnings from this role-play to your host family?

What might you do to help you integrate with your host family's rules and values?

Note: At the end, ask the following question (to close the processing) to role-players: "If you had to do it over again, what would you do differently?"

ACTIVITY 4: APPLICATION

Time needed: 30 minutes

Homestay Cross-Cultural Framework:

Volunteers are placed into environments that require them to interact as functioning members of the host culture. They learn from their communities and contribute skills in ways that help people become more self-reliant. Volunteers are also expected to share this experience back home in the U.S. For this exchange to occur as a rich and positive development experience for all, it is essential that Volunteers gain a level of comfort and fluency in the host culture. Homestays help provide these cross-cultural skills, which are vital to the Volunteers' adaptation. This activity is a group discussion based on the impact of homestay on Volunteers' adaptation. Trainers should use the information in Section II of the Homestay Final Report. There are five statements in that section summarizing Volunteers' definitions of homestays:

- A major cross-cultural training function
- An effective preparation for life in the host country
- An experiential self-awareness process
- A participatory cross -cultural training laboratory
- A cross-cultural relationship building mechanism

Trainers will read Volunteers' comments and ask questions like "How do you see homestay fulfilling this assumption?" to engage an open discussion on homestay outcomes. Trainers should encourage participation and share their experiences too.

Closing: 10 minutes

Group Evaluation:

Questions:
- What were the pluses and minuses of this session?
- How might it have been more meaningful?
- Any suggestions or comments?

Personal Reflection:

Ask participants to take 5 minutes to write down their thoughts about homestays starting with: "Today I learned.... I would like to learn more about...." (This piece is the introduction to their cross-cultural journals which will be introduced to them in-country.)

SAMPLE - THAILAND

HOMESTAY EXPECTATIONS

OVERVIEW

This session will ease the transition to homestay by assisting Trainees to identify their expectations of the homestay experience and the expectations Thai nationals have of visiting guests. Trainees will learn that the expectations Thai families have of guests will vary from family to family, but the variations are largely minimal. Likewise, Americans have expectations of visiting guests, which may be similar to those held by Thai families.

Overall anxiety among Trainees will lessen as they come to realize that although they may be placed in rather different and ambiguous living situations, Thai nationals share the same goal of wanting guests to be well received just as Americans do. However, the idea of a good host(-ess) takes on a different, albeit not necessarily vastly so, tone in different cultures.

During the session, Trainees also explore how to balance sensitivity and respect for the hosting family with the personal need for privacy and maintenance of personal integrity.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the differences and similarities between Thai and American expectations of guests who come to stay in their homes.
2. To discuss concerns related to the homestay experience.
3. To identify coping strategies for circumstances Trainees may find difficult or cumbersome during the homestay phase.

INTEGRATION POINTS

Since living with a host family can be stressful because expectations are often ambiguous, or never stated, exploring one's own expectations and developing a sense of sympathy and empathy assists in the process of cultural adjustment.

In fact, often what the Trainee experiences during homestay is simply culture shock, the adjustment to living in a new cultural setting. It goes beyond just living as guests with a host family; it involves having a public experience in what was once a private setting. That is to say that in one's own home, one can be oneself and have a sense of privacy, but living in a homestay with families of a different culture is like being in a fishbowl.

Since the experience is public and outsiders look in, it results in the individual's looking inward as well. Nonetheless, the experience of culture shock can be alleviated by the realization that it is likely to happen, and as the individual explores his/her cultural values more intimately, the differences and similarities become more manageable.

TIME

60 minutes

MATERIALS

Flip chart paper, marker, tape

PREPARATION

1. Prepare the skits and the points to be covered in the skits.
2. Select actors and actresses for the skits.
3. If there are visiting volunteers, invite them to participate in the session.
4. Gather concerns and feedback from villagers and common issues trainees raised before moving into homestay during previous trainings.

Trainer's Notes

1. When comparing the lists of expectations, the facilitator should not spend much time on this part. It should be a quick comparison and then much of the remaining time should be devoted to concerns brought up by Trainees.
2. It is important to stress that there are variations in the expectations people have, and this session aims to increase awareness in balancing an individual's own needs with those of other people in cross-cultural living.
3. The following are some common expectations villagers have about Trainees living in their homes:
    a) Trainees will be available to teach English.
    b) Trainees can eat Thai food (won't need special meals.)
    c) Trainees will act like a member of the family.
    d) Trainees will inform family members about where they are going and when they will return.
    e) Trainees will speak the Thai they've learned in class.
    f) Trainees will join in on family activities.
    g) Trainees will help do household tasks.

Delivery

STEP 1: Climate Setting (10 minutes)

Present a skit that indicates the different feelings of Trainees before going to homestay and the feelings of respective host family and villagers about hosting American Trainees.

Skit 1: Several Trainees who are about to move to homestay are discussing their concerns regarding homestay.

Skit 2: A group of villagers are discussing their concerns regarding hosting American Trainees.

STEP 2: Stating Objectives and Overview (5 minutes)

A. After the skits, the facilitator asks participants whether they have similar feelings like the Trainees

in the skit, and then points out that both parties have concerns regarding homestay.

B. State the objectives of the session and tell participants that there will be an opportunity to brainstorm about "Thai and American expectations in their interactions with each other" and a follow-up discussion.

STEP 3: Brainstorming (10 minutes)

Divide Trainees into two groups, and language trainers will comprise a third group. Provide the groups with flipcharts and markers. Allocate 10 minutes to discuss and list on the flipcharts expectations families have of guests in their homes.

STEP 4: Processing (20 minutes)

A. Assemble the groups and allow each group of Trainees to present their lists; language trainers present their list last.

B. The facilitator asks participants to point out some interesting points from the lists.

C. Follow with a discussion of similarities and differences in expectations between the lists compiled by Americans and the list drawn up by the Thai trainers.

D. Invite visiting Volunteers (if applicable) to share their experiences and give some suggestions regarding homestay. Also, the cross-cultural coordinator can share feedback gathered during the homestay site checks.

STEP 5: Generalizing and Applying (10 minutes)

A. Draw out some generalizations by asking questions such as:

1. What do you expect to learn from the homestay experience? How will that knowledge help in your two-year stay in Thailand? How would that knowledge be applicable in your return to the U.S.? What changes, if any, do you believe this experience will provide?

2. Do you feel at ease with the transition to homestay?

3. What strategies can you employ to clear up ambiguity, confusion, or misunderstanding?

4. Do you have any other concerns that have not yet been addressed?

STEP 6: Linkage and Closure (5 minutes)

Make a linkage to the session, "Homestay Preparation," in which they will receive more information from the cross-cultural coordinator. Note that during homestay, trainers will provide daily time for Trainees to reflect on their experiences with their host families.

SAMPLE – TANZANIA

APPENDIX G:
HOMESTAY FAMILY ORIENTATION FOR TRAINEES

HOMESTAY FAMILY ORIENTATION FOR TRAINEES

OVERVIEW

This session prepares Trainees for their move into homestay families. It presents the challenges they may face, expectations of their families, proper social etiquette, and, ultimately the value of the homestay experience.

OBJECTIVES

Trainees will be able to :

1. Analyze skits and describe the problems potentially associated with the homestay experience;
2. Discuss the expectations host families have of them, describing potentially problematic behaviors;
3. Discuss any concerns they may have before their move into families;
4. Use basic equipment that may be found in the homestay;
5. Introduce *Culture Matters.*

TIME

I hour, 30 minutes

MATERIALS

1. The "script" for a two act role-play (first night/diet and nutrition issues);
2. Hurricane lamps, matches, and kerosene;
3. Props for demonstrations of toilet use and bathing (bucket, basin, cup, soap, etc.);
4. Flip chart, marking pens, etc.; and
5. *Culture Matters.*

STAFF

Five training staff members to perform the role-play, plus four trainers to facilitate discussion; several currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers (or trainers) to demonstrate basic equipment, etc., at homestay.

DELIVERY

Session Activities:

1 A role-play in two acts performed by PST training staff;
2. A report on the Host Family Orientation Workshop;
3. A discussion of use of hurricane lamp lighting, pit latrine use, and splash-method bathing; and
4. Explanation of logistics (transportation issues, provisions, money, and pp. 1-3; Chapter One, "Understanding Culture," pp. 5-12; "Tough Moment"/ critical incident, p. 12; "Rules of the House: Interacting with a Host Country Family," pp. 156-160. (All from *Culture Matters.*)

Homestay Preparations:

STEP 1: Introduction of Session: Overview (5 minutes)

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STEP 2: A Role-Play in Two Acts (30 minutes)

Act One: PCV's First Night with a Host Family

Act Two: Diet and Nutrition Issues

STEP 3: Assignment (5 minutes)

Culture Matters, "Introduction," pp. 1-3; Chapter One, "Understanding Culture," pp. 5-12; "Rules of the House: Interacting with a Host Country Family," pp. 156-160.

STEP 4: Discussion: Host Family/Trainee Responsibilities (35 minutes)

Pre-Service Training Welcome Book, 1998, "A Homestay Guide: Living with a Tanzanian Family," pp. 25-27.

Demonstrations

STEP 5: Discussion: Logistics of the Homestay (5 minutes)

- Report on Host Family Workshop
- Transportation between the Homestays and Training Site
- What to take with you/ what Peace Corps provides/expenses
- Meeting your host family

HOST FAMILY/ TRAINEE ORIENTATION ROLE PLAYS

Act One: First Night With Host Family

It is late Saturday afternoon, October 3rd, and Peace Corps education Trainee Frank has gone off with members of his host family. No sooner does he reach his new home than he is offered tea, served with milk and sugar. And then a second cup. His host brother is nice enough to take his bag to his room. His host sister shows him the English book she is using in secondary school. His next two hours are spent describing his family back home, trying to explain where South Carolina is, learning everyone's names, and using the Swahili he had learned earlier in the day, especially *asante.*

By dinner time, the Trainee is exhausted, and is glad to eat. The family begins the meal with a prayer, in which he is invited to participate. His religion becomes a topic

of dinner conversation. He is glad to focus on food, and he eats enthusiastically, although he is aware enough of his surroundings to notice that his host sister seems to spend more time in the kitchen than at the table. She is directed to put more food on his plate: more meat, more bananas, more chips, even though he has not eaten all those served to him earlier—and then a second bottle of Coke is opened for him. With all eyes on him, he protests that he has eaten and drunk enough, that he's full, that he wasn't as hungry as he thought, that water would have been sufficient at dinner. They offer him water. "Maybe the tea filled me up earlier. It was very sweet. May I help clear the table?" He continues to be the center of attention after dinner, as his host sister works in the kitchen. Before he knows it, he is being offered hot water for a splash bath. No one else seems to be getting ready to bathe. It is 9 o'clock. Is it polite, he wonders, to go off to his room? "I'd like to go to bed now," he says.

Once in his room, he thinks about how he can explain the situation to his language and cross cultural trainer on Monday, without sounding ungrateful. The host family hopes they are off to a good start.

Act Two: Diet and Nutrition

Frank has been with his host family now for a week, but has been missing several evening meals with his family. He usually comes home in time for dinner, but often says that he has already eaten with friends or that a teacher at the school had asked him for dinner. He does not seem that interested in the breakfasts that are prepared for him either, whether they are leftovers from the night before or eggs that have been prepared especially for him. One day, when his host mother is cleaning his room, she notices that he has quite a big supply of food in his closet. Obviously, he has been eating in his room. The host parents think they had better talk with their Trainee.

What needs to be said?

Sample – Tanzania

Hosting a Guest

Overview

Understanding the adaptation the host families will be making while they live with them is important in creating awareness, sensitivity and appreciation in the trainees once they realize that they aren't the only ones adapting.

Objective

1. To assist the trainee in understanding the adaptation that takes place within a family hosting an international visitor.
2. To explore the concept and reality of family while introducing the effect of visitors and outside intervention within a family.

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Blank flip chart paper and markers
- Flip chart with list on "The Effects of Hosting a Peace Corps Trainee on the Host Family" (see below)

The Effect of Hosting a Peace Corps Trainee on the Host Family

- Food—variety, quality, extra preparation time
- Family's reputation in community
- Changing relationships and dynamics within family
- Vulnerability to outsider's criticism
- Lowered self-esteem caused by lack of material possessions
- Sacrifices, ie., sharing meager supplies with an extra person
- Cramped space, i.e., moving family members to other rooms to provide a separate room
- Abiding by family rules
- Family schedule, i.e., bed time, showers, meals, laundry, tidiness
- Hygiene
- Gracious receptivity of gifts and hospitality

Delivery

STEP 1: (20 minutes) Divide the Trainees into groups of 3 or 4. Ask Trainees to recollect when a visitor stayed overnight with their family and to reflect on the feelings and the way this visitor affected the family during that time. Ask them to share their experiences in their groups. In a large group discussion, ask a representative to summarize their group's discussion. (Note: it can be optional to share these stories, since no one should feel threatened or embarrassed.)

STEP 2. (10 minutes) Give each group a blank piece of flip chart paper. Ask each group to list the different aspects of the host family's life which will be affected by having a Peace Corps Trainee living in their home. When they have finished, compare their list to the list above, which will be prepared in advance on flip chart paper.

Sample – Africa

Appendix H: Families and Trainees Joint Sessions

Starting the Relationship

Overview

By getting valuable information about their families, Trainees and host families will feel more comfortable entering the program. This session is designed to allow Trainees to start the process of getting to know their host families before moving in with them.

Objectives

1. To start the relationship building process
2. To develop participants' involvement in the homestay process

Time

2 hours

Materials

Markers and paper

Cultural guides (host country trainers) to help with facilitation

DELIVERY

STEP 1: Welcome and Introduction (20 minutes)

Thank participants for coming to this session and have them introduce themselves by giving names, occupations/ programs, etc.

STEP 2: Opener: Trust fall (to start building trust)

Have participants form a very tight circle. Ask a volunteer to enter the inside of the circle. The volunteer is to stand in a stiff, erect way, eyes closed, and fall back on a signal from the Trainer. The participants in the circle then gently move the volunteer around the circle. Ask for other volunteers to enter the circle and engage in the "trust fall."

STEP 3: Process the action: Did you trust the group to catch you? How did it feel to be moved about? Did the activity affect or improve group cohesion?

STEP 4: **Activity 1: Genogram** (60 minutes)

Pass out paper and markers (different colors) to each participant. Ask them to draw their family tree, including the extended family. Use different symbols to represent: male, female, marriage, adopted child. For example, a square will represent a male, a circle a female, etc...

Facts to be recorded: Names occupations, and family titles ("prince", "cadi", etc.)

Give participants 20 minutes to do individual work. The cultural guides will help host families do their tasks.

Activity 2: Small Group Work:

Have triads meet their family's representative to form a small group of 6 facilitated by a cultural guide.

Share genograms, and explore the following issues:

- **Family Structure:** Members, roles and responsibilities, where they live.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** How do people greet each other? Who may disagree with whom? How are insults expressed? Family rules and discussion topics?

- **Discipline:** How do people behave at home? In public? Means of discipline? Who has authority over whom? How are decisions made? Who participates in the decision-making process?
- **Food:** What is eaten? In what order, how often? What are the rules for eating habits? manners, offering food, handling food, discarding food? What foods: favorite, taboo, typical?
- **Holidays and Celebrations:** What holidays are observed, and what are their purposes? Which celebrations do you return "home" for?
- **Values:** What personal attributes are considered desirable? Undesirable? What things in the world are considered desirable? Undesirable?
- **Toxic Issues:** Does your family talk about money, sex, religion, alcohol, feelings, etc... What topics are considered to be taboo?

Mini-Processing:

The following questions can be asked to participants to help them process the activity:

- How did you feel about this activity?
- What valuable information have you found out about your host family / your new family member, the Trainee?
- What does the notion of extended family mean to you?
- How do you picture your place in your host family? How do you picture your new family member (the Trainee) fitting in?
- What difficulties can you foresee in your adaptation into the family?
- How will you approach your integration into the family structure, i.e., strategies for host families and Trainees.

Appendix I: Sample Homestay Booklet for Host Families

Sample – Moldova

Dates of the Homestay

June 25 Trainees and families are introduced at a welcoming event that will take place at school no. 11; host families take their Trainees home with them and the homestay begins

August 26 Homestays end and Trainees move to their sites

Objectives of Homestays:

Through their experience living with Moldovan families, the Trainees will be able to:

- Learn about Moldovan family life, social system, culture, and religions;
- Identify differences and similarities between Moldovan and American lifestyles, customs and values;
- Learn to adapt and adjust to the Moldovan way of life;
- Practice speaking Romanian;
- Observe and practice culturally appropriate modes of behavior such as:
  - dressing,
  - communicating (verbal and nonverbal; ways of saying "no,")
  - interacting within the community.
- Get to know members of the host family and the community.

Through living with a Moldovan family, Trainees are expected and encouraged to show the following attitudes:

- Openness to new experiences;
- Respect for Moldovan culture and people;
- Sensitivity to other people's culture, values, and ideas;
- Willingness to learn about Moldovan culture and language.

Host families are encouraged to support the Trainees in the above objectives through their willingness to answer and ask questions, assist the Trainees speaking in Romanian and introducing them to Moldovan ways of socializing (picnics, walks in the parks/

forests, visiting theaters/museums, visiting with families and friends, etc.). Host families are asked to treat Trainees as members of the family and not as guests. Trainees should participate in household activities as do all members of their host families.

THE TRAINEES

The 25 Americans coming to Moldova will reflect the diversity of the citizens of the United States. They will come in all shapes, colors and sizes! There will be women and men, many in their 20's others in their 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's. As people of the United States come from many different ethnic and racial backgrounds, some Trainees will be Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, or native Americans.

LODGING

Most Trainees may have been living on their own for some time and will not have lived with their own families for awhile. Though their move to Moldova is exciting, it is also one that brings much change in their lives. To allow them some privacy during this major learning and adjustment period, the Trainees must have their own bedrooms. It is important to note that sometimes, especially after a long day of classes, the Trainees may need time to be alone, to rest or to study. Should they spend some time alone in their rooms please do not be alarmed or offended.

DAILY SCHEDULE, MEALS AND WATER

The Trainees will have sessions at the training center (School No. 11) Monday to Friday from 0800 to 1630 and Saturday from 0800 to 1200. Trainees will eat breakfast and dinner with their families every day, as well as lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Monday through Friday they will eat lunch at the training center. If a Trainee is going to be absent for any meal they would normally have with their host family, they should let their family know in advance.

Since one of the objectives of the homestay experience is to have Trainees experience Moldovan culture, most of the food served should be typical daily dishes. Some Volunteers may also like to help with the cooking. Special food considerations can be worked out according to individual likes and dislikes. Trainees and host families should discuss this in advance.

As the Trainees are new in the country, they will need to take extra care in maintaining their health. For example, all drinking water must be boiled. (This is a requirement of the Peace Corps' medical officer.)

LAUNDRY

Host families are expected to supply bed linen and towels for their Trainees. The cost for Trainees' personal laundry needs are not covered by the Peace Corps. Some Trainees may wish to wash their own clothes, while others may wish to make arrangements for it to be done. The Trainee will pay for any personal laundry services.

PAYMENT

Host families will receive Lei 12 each day the Trainees are living with them. This amount covers the meals and lodging the families are providing. This money will be paid in three installments directly to the host family. The first week's payment will be made on June 25 before the Trainees begin living with their host family. The second payment will be made on July 17 and the final payment will be made at the close of the homestay experience.

PROBLEMS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

So they can work things out together, host families should be open with their Trainees about any problems or concerns. If, however, a host family has a specific concern or problem, they should contact the training coordinator at 44-32-78, at School No. 11.

Peace Corps / Moldova

Sample – Kenya

Appendix J: Living with a Kenyan Family: A Homestay Guide for Trainees

Introduction

If you want to understand Kenyan people, the best place to start is within a family.

"The smallest unit that represents a Nation is the family." Sociologists say the family makes up the community and the community makes up the Nation. The family (father, mother, and children) represents societal roles that each individual plays, the relationship, the extent and the limitations among the roles. The roles assign authority, leadership behaviors, manners; and, in final analysis, guide and determine the social, cultural, political and economic structure and direction of a Nation.

The above thought has guided Peace Corps in planning and implementing PST in several countries. In Kenya, brief family live-ins or homestays (usually 2-3 days) have been in operation since 1979. Since October, full-time homestays have been incorporated into the PST.

What Exactly is a Homestay Program?

The homestay program represents a training agreement between three parties:

1. The training center which is responsible for:
    - The overall planning and implementation of the program;
    - Selection and training of the recruited families; and
    - Counseling and compensation of the families.
2. The family unit (all members of the family), who first meet the hosting requirements and consent to hosting a Trainee for an agreed upon period.
3. The Trainee, who by joining the Peace Corps training in Kenya, is aware in advance of the homestay component.

THE TRAINING CENTER ROLE

The training requirements and responsibilities are channeled through the Peace Corps country director and to the training director in Naivasha. In Kenya, the homestay program is coordinated by a homestay coordinator, whose responsibilities (with the assistance of other training staff) are to oversee the smooth running of the program.

PLANNING

This exercise begins at least a month prior to the arrival of each group of Trainees. Information needed for this exercise is in the Pre-Training Questionnaires filled out by Trainees and in the Guidance to Homestay Allocations. The latter contains information not covered by the Pre-Training Questionnaires and is specifically used for homestay. This information covers issues such as Trainees' preferences, dietary needs (e.g., vegetarians), allergies, and medical problems among others.

Planning also involves some of the training staff visiting host families to help them better understand the homestay program.

HOST FAMILY SELECTION

When the program was implemented on a full time basis, recruiting and selection of host families was a long exercise. Currently we have a large number of families who are familiar with the program, and have either been recruited or selected to host Trainees.

Guidelines for selecting a family are many. Only some will be mentioned. If we keep in mind that the objective of the homestay program is training, then communication is the first priority. In each of the selected families, English and Kiswahili must be spoken by a minimum of one person, and that person must be available during the stay of the Trainee. The person must be knowledgeable enough to assist the Trainee in general learning through questions and answers. This is a very key person and the availability of such a person may override the requirement of a complete family unit. For example a single female school teacher with children whose husband has passed away, may be selected to host a female Trainee instead of a complete family where only young children speak some English.

The host family should have a spare room with a bed, a chair, table and lantern. The room must be lockable. Other requirements include: distance from the training center, security of the community, and general hygienic and sanitary conditions. Most

of the families selected are usually middle class in the homestay community.

THE HOST FAMILY

An agreement is reached between the family and the training center when the family has met the above requirements and has agreed to specific responsibilities and expectations.

HOST FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Host families are expected to take in a Trainee as a family member—not as a guest or boarder. This commitment means:

The family must know the whereabouts of the Trainee any time he/she is not at the training center. The family is our contact in case of emergencies.

Should any issues arise that the family and the Trainee are unable to resolve, the family or the Trainee is obligated to inform the training center staff as soon as possible.

HOST FAMILY REQUESTS AND PREFERENCES

Once a family has been selected and has agreed to the responsibilities and expectations, the family can make certain requests based on family composition, family norms, beliefs, practices, etc. For example, a family composed of five girls and one boy, would normally request a female Trainee. A family may request a non-smoker. Some families may request Trainees close to the age of a son or daughter. A Catholic family may wish to host a Catholic Trainee. At times, a family may opt not to take a Trainee if a specific request cannot be met.

Apart from the above, all other considerations for allocating Trainees are based on information received prior to the arrival of the Trainees. This information includes, age, sex, profession, disabilities, allergies, dietary needs, religion, marital status, etc.

THE TRAINEE

Peace Corps Kenya makes every effort to inform prospective Trainees on various aspects of Peace Corps service in Kenya. Among the literature distributed to applicants are the various components of training; the Homestay program is one of them.

By joining Peace Corps Kenya, each Trainee becomes a party to the Homestay Training Agreement.

TRAINEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

All the statements below are guidelines the training staff and host families have found most conducive to a happy learning homestay experience. A great deal of what trainees learn from their immediate family and the community will carry them through their two years of Peace Corps service in Kenya. Trainees are encouraged to use their family as a resource for learning about the culture.

Trainees should:

- Keep open lines of communication. Note that most current host families have hosted another Trainee; probably occupying the same room you will.
- Share your point of view with your family members. They need to know you just as much as you need to know them.
- Keep in mind that respect for the family norms regarding hours, manners, customs, dress, and religion will create harmony instead of misunderstanding.
- Integrate yourself into your family as much as possible. Most families will keep a distance if you keep one. A few will make attempts to know you but will be unsure. Helping with chores, socializing, sharing pictures of home, playing with children are all ways of becoming a family member.
- Eat what the family eats without demanding special treatment. You are a member of the family not a boarder. Note that most families will not accept special responsibilities or treatment other than what they have accepted by agreement with the Peace Corps.
- Practice what you have learned in Kiswahili with your family members. You will find kids especially eager to help. When they are speaking Kikuyu to each other, and you would like to be involved in the discussion, ask them to speak Kiswahili.
- Should there be any problems or misunderstanding between you and your family members, do everything possible to resolve the differences before sharing it with anybody else. Rumors and gossip spread like fire, especially in small communities, like your homestay communities.

- Accompany your family to as many activities as you can. Ask them to take you around the community and places of interest.
- Always arrive at your Homestay before dark (7.00 p.m.). It is not safe to be out after dark.
- Last but not least, use your homestay coordinator and other training staff as your main resource persons.

HOMESTAY EVALUATIONS: STATEMENTS BY TRAINEES

What role has the homestay played?

- I learned very much from them and enjoyed being there.
- Positive in that I got to know how to make do without electricity, water etc., also to see how a typical family lives. But I don't know if I benefited all that much from staying the whole twelve weeks.
- Assimilation to a less convenience-oriented lifestyle and knowledge of a very different community than found in the States.
- A positive one — I enjoyed going home at the end of the day.
- Place to relax and get away from training, learned a lot about some Kenyans.

TIPS TO HELP YOU RELAX AT YOUR HOMESTAY DURING THE FIRST THREE DAYS:

- Know where the necessary facilities are. The outhouse or the toilet are normally a distance from the main house. You will need a flashlight or a lantern during the night.
- Know where to bathe (also normally outside the house). Learn to bathe using the splash method. The trick is to keep the water clean by keeping soapy dirty water away from the basin.
- Identify someone who speaks English well for consultations. There should be at least one at every homestay.

- Make your room a nice place to go to. Your bed should be comfortable to sleep on. You should have a study lamp or lantern. Your room should have a place to hang or arrange your belongings. Should anything need to be done, consult your homestay parents or the homestay coordinator.

- Write down the name of your family, their address, and the name of the area where they live. Know other Trainees who live near you.

DOS AND DON'TS IN THE HOMESTAY PROGRAM:

- Do learn to do as many things for yourself as possible. These may include preparing a meal, doing your own laundry, heating bath water, preparing breakfast, lighting lanterns, etc. After all, you will have to do all these things once you are a Volunteer.

- Do always inform your family of your whereabouts. In case of emergencies, training staff checks with your family first during weekends and after five during working days.

- Do inform the duty officer, should you be unable to go home due to sickness. A message with your neighbor Trainee will also assist.

- Do always take the family allowance check or letter to your parents the same day you have collected it from the Training Center.

- Do always return to the training center should you miss your bus or are lost. Do not hitch-hike at night.

- Do not keep anything unlocked that kids will play with or eat. These include your medical kit, sweets, sodas, balloons, toys, chocolate, etc.

- Do not always take a yes for a yes. Always double check the information.

- Do not invite or take members of the opposite sex to your homestay for a night, unless arrangements have been made with your parents.

- Do not spend nights away from your host family, or at your fellow Trainee's home without reporting to your host family. Your host family is required to report to the Training Center whenever you do not turn up home at an appropriate time.

- Do not discuss the expenditure of the family allowance with your homestay parents. It is their allowance.
- Do not use the word "theft" at your homestay unless you have witnessed it. Theft is generally taken very seriously.

SAMPLE – KENYA

HOMESTAY LIVING CONDITIONS: A SURVEY DONE BY TRAINEES

1. Modern Kitchen:
   Yes – 5
   No – 47

   Wood Burning Stove – 12
   Charcoal Jiko – 33
   Kerosene – 12
   Gas – 5

   Note: Many homes without electricity may have a combination of all the above (e.g. gas stove for quick boiling and a charcoal jiko for slow cooking.)

2. Number of Homes with Electricity – 7 Number of Homes without Electricity – 40

3. Water Supply:
   Rain water – 37
   Piped water – 12
   Well – 6
   Others include community tanks and water bought from the Town

   Council Sanitary Drinking Water: Yes – 45 No – 5

   Note: Many homes have varied sources of water e.g. rain water reserved for bathing and washing etc. Piped clean water whose availability is not always reliable.

4. Types of Floors in Houses: Cement floors.

5. Building Material of the Main House:
   Cement/concrete – 27
   Wood/other 15

6. Trainees Quarters separate from the Main House: Yes – 3 No – 42

7. Personal Hygiene:
   Indoor Bathing Area – 38
   Outdoor Bathing Area – 13
   Indoor Toilet – 10
   Outdoor Latrine – 42

   Note: Some may have a combination of either of the above.

8. Host father works and lives away from home: Yes – 18 No – 24
   Other – 5
   (this may mean, no host father or wife has passed away)

9. Family member speaks adequate English: Yes – 42 No – 1

10. Number of children in household:
    Highest number recorded – 11
    Lowest – 0
    Average of total recorded – 4

11. Total commuting time each day to the Training Center:
    Shortest time – 40 minutes
    Longest time – 150 minutes
    Average time – 60 minutes

12. Number of hours spent helping with chores:
    Shortest – 0
    Longest – 2 hours
    Average – 40 minutes

13. Types of general chores you help with:

Gather fire wood	Looking after children
Washing clothes	Garden work
Chopping wood	Milking cows
Help with cooking	Serving food
Shelling peas	Clearing dishes
Looking after cattle	Fetching water
Feeding animals/chickens	Shopping with brother/sister/parents
Washing dishes	Minor housework repairs

For teachers:

Teaching/coaching your homestay sisters and brothers.

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